



# THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION  
DEVOTED TO BORDER HISTORY

*Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.*

No. 95.

Price, Five Cents.

## BUFFALO BILL'S GALLANT STAND

OR  
THE INDIAN'S LAST VICTORY



A HIDEOUS SAVAGE FORCED HIS PONY FORWARD AND FIRED HIS RIFLE FULL INTO BUFFALO BILL'S FACE, BUT THE BULLET MISSED ITS MARK, FOR GENERAL CUSTER HAD DELIVERED A SLASHING CUT AT THE NECK OF THE REDSKIN JUST IN THE NICK OF TIME.





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## BUFFALO BILL'S GALLANT STAND;

OR,

## The Indian's Last Victory.

By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE NINE SAVAGES.

A rushing, brawling river, swollen with winter rains, sweeping down on its bosom uprooted saplings and the occasional carcass of an animal drowned trying to cross; the dark, leafless trees of huge tracts of forest lying in the background, and straight ahead the vast level prairie, which now, in spite of its being the end of March, was held fast in grim winter's bitter grip.

A cheerless and uninviting landscape, with no sign of life to break the monotony.

Yes, there was one.

A solitary horseman, in a thick fur overcoat, with military overalls, and high boots, his hat pulled well down on his head, came trotting from the direction of the forest, and, keeping along the river bank, skirted the great open prairie.

The rider was Buffalo Bill, world-renowned scout and hunter, at that time acting as chief of the scouts of the United States Army.

It was a time of trouble; the Indians were in arms, and slaying in all directions.

Sioux, Cherokee and Crow had all united, and the red warriors roamed in their thousands over hundreds of square miles, a sanguinary, fiery track marking their progress.

They had now got into the vast territory known as the Bad Lands, and the difficulty was to locate them.

This task Buffalo Bill had undertaken.

As he rode along his eyes roved in all directions, and little escaped his notice. Of a sudden he drew rein and gazed steadfastly at the ground; a moment later he dismounted, and on hands and knees examined the sign.

There was Indian sign, plain and freshly made. Working systematically, the scout followed the tracks, and found they led up from the river, where the impress of a canoe was still left on the bank.

Retracing his steps, Buffalo Bill followed the tracks with all the care and skill of the trained backwoodsman.

"There were nine Indians," he muttered, "belonging to the Sioux nation. They were part of a big war-party, and were probably on their way to join their companions, or were engaged upon some minor business."

No care had been taken to cover the trail, and Buffalo Bill followed it easily.

It led him back to another branch of the forest which he had quitted, and then branched off to the north.

"There must have been more than nine men altogether," thought Buffalo Bill.

"Some one took the canoe back; it was nowhere hidden, that's certain, and it was not brought with them."

Everything seemed to point to the fact that some particular reason had prompted the Indians to land, for



though they made a big sweep, their trail led back to a spot not so very far from the place where they had landed.

About an hour later the ashes of a recent camp-fire were reached; close to the ashes the broken stock of a gun lay, one or two feathers were trodden into the damp earth, and some thirty yards away a round fur cap, such as is worn by better-class traders, lay between the roots of a great tree.

Buffalo Bill's intimate knowledge of woodcraft enabled him to read the history of what had happened as plainly as though it had been printed in a book and laid before him.

A white man had been lying or sitting by a fire, the reflection of which had been seen by a party of braves going up stream in a canoe.

These had landed, made a detour, and taken the white man by surprise.

He had made a fight, the feathers showing he had knocked one or two about, while the broken gun stock testified to his prowess.

From the footprints Buffalo Bill also gathered that he had been overpowered, captured, and borne off prisoner, probably toward that big party that was known to be on the warpath.

The scout spent no time in idle conjecture—a fellow-being was in danger.

Duty and inclination both led him the same way, and, mounting, he commenced his search for the perpetrators of the crime.

So marked was the trail that as long as the light lasted it was easy to follow it on horseback, and mile after mile was left behind.

From the freshness of the marks, it was evident the party was not so very much ahead—four hours at the utmost, and Buffalo Bill had the advantage of being mounted.

When the light got faint, the scout dismounted, and kept on until he could see no longer, then he gave over until the moon, which was almost at the full, should rise.

The night was extremely cold, and the scout had as much as he could do to keep his blood circulated as he sat on the frozen ground waiting for the moon to rise.

At last it got light enough for him to see the trail, and off he started.

The Indians had made straight across the prairie, evidently making for that wild district toward the foot of the Rockies where white men seldom set foot.

The ground was very undulating now, and in places was covered with stunted, scrubby trees.

In many places the trail was difficult to follow on account of the nature of the ground; but Buffalo Bill persevered, and after about three hours' work, he was delighted at seeing straight in front of him a faint glimmer that looked in the distance like the glowing end of a match.

As he got closer this appeared and disappeared, but every time he saw it, it got larger and larger, which proved he was going in the right direction.

There was clearly uneven ground between him and this light, which was probably in the midst of the scrubby trees before mentioned.

By and by the red glow took more definite shape, and it was seen to be a fire.

Nearer and nearer the scout drew, until he judged the time had arrived to exercise more caution.

He hobbled his steed, saw that his rifle and revolvers were in working order, and then started on foot to make a reconnoissance.

He was approaching a thick clump of scrubby bushes, and among these a fire was burning.

Around this fire several figures were to be seen moving occasionally to and fro.

Getting around to the windward, Buffalo Bill approached slowly and cautiously.

As he got nearer he saw that the encampment was one of Indians. Counting them, he found that they were nine in number.

Closer and closer he got, and at length he could distinguish the features of the Indians, and could see all that was taking place around the fire, which was a large one.

Beside it was a heap of fuel intended to feed it during the night, and within the glow of the flames lay a huge piece of buffalo meat wrapped up in the hide.

At some distance further, though still within view from the fire, lay a figure seemingly lashed to a long pole, and in such a fashion that it was impossible for him to move.

By the dress Buffalo Bill saw at once the prisoner was a white man, doubtless he who had been captured the night before.

The number of bones lying around pointed to the fact that the Indians, as is their wont, had eaten to excess, and, like gorged animals, would sleep long and heavily.

Several, in fact, had wrapped themselves in their blankets, and were snoring loudly, while two of them conversed in drowsy tones while they puffed at their pipes.

One man only was thoroughly awake, and he was the sentry over the prisoner.

From time to time, for the purpose of keeping himself alert, this man would take a turn around the fire, which he would kick into renewed life, occasionally throwing on another log, or he would hum a native air, staring out across the prairie.

Once he crossed to the prisoner, whom he savagely kicked, and when the poor fellow cried out, he laughed gleefully, and in broken English reviled him for sleeping so soundly, promising he would soon be at his journey's end, when he would discover how Indians put the endurance of their prisoners to the test.

By their long hair and their war-paint Buffalo Bill saw the men were of the Sioux nation, and that they were on the warpath.

An hour passed, and the sentry occasionally yawned and stretched himself, being clearly as sleepy as his companions, and from the glances he kept throwing at the moon, anxiously waiting for his term of standing sentry to expire, so that he might get the sleep he coveted.

The scout was concealed in a burrow by the side of a spring by which the Indians had encamped for the sake of the water.

An idea occurred to Buffalo Bill, and he proceeded to put it into execution. With a sapling branch that lay by him he splashed the water a dozen times, then looked to see whether the Indian had noticed the noise.

If so, he took no notice, but continued to gaze dreamily into the fire. In a few minutes' time Buffalo Bill splashed



the water again, and saw that the redskin had noticed the uncommon sound.

In a few more minutes the splashing was continued, and the Indian pricked up his ears and gazed over toward the spring, but in the darkness could see nothing.

The spring lay about fifty feet from the camp-fire, therefore the sound could be only faintly heard.

Still, the scout knew the curiosity of Indians, and was sure that by and by the man would have to come across and see what it was that caused the noise.

The danger was that he might awaken one of his companions, so that he might have company, and this would have spoiled the scout's plans.

He proceeded with great caution, therefore, and splashed gently, making a noise as if some big fish were caught on a hook and was struggling to get free.

Presently he had the satisfaction of seeing the redskin arise from the fire, and, looking that his rifle was loaded, come strolling toward the spring.

This was what the scout wanted, and it favored his plan for effecting the release of the prisoner, that being the object he had in view.

He crouched down as the Indian approached, and kept entirely out of sight.

The brave reached the spring, and gazed into the water.

Seeing nothing, however, he strolled along a little way, and was turning to return to the fire, when something black shot up, as though out of the ground, a thin, snaky object curled in the air, falling round the Indian's neck, and in an instant he was on his back with a lasso tightening around his throat.

The choking tightness prevented him from crying out, and before he hardly realized what had happened, a dark form sprang upon him and forced something into his mouth which prevented him from uttering a sound.

Arms and legs were bound, and with very little noise the Indian was made a prisoner.

Buffalo Bill stripped his head-dress and blanket from him, and, putting them on himself, walked back toward the camp.

Not one of the Indians moved, and the scout was free to act. He crossed to the prisoner, over whom he bent.

"Don't make a sound," he whispered; "I am going to liberate you."

The white man was half asleep, and hardly understood what was happening as Buffalo Bill cut his bonds.

He rubbed his eyes, and stared at his deliverer.

"Can you stand?" asked the scout.

"Great heavens! Bill Cody!" gasped the man.

The scout looked at the prisoner's fair hair and beard, but did not recognize him.

"Don't you remember Leonard Dare?" asked the prisoner.

"What, can it be my old comrade of the Seventh Cavalry?" said Buffalo Bill.

"I little thought I was following on the trail of an old chum. But can you manage to walk?"

"I'll try," replied Leonard Dare, and he endeavored to move, but found his limbs were so cramped and dead, owing to having been bound up so tightly, that he could not move.

"That's awkward," whispered the scout; "but take this revolver.

"If these fellows wake up we shall have to fight for it."

For some minutes Buffalo Bill chafed Dave's legs and arms, and presently the man was able to stand on his feet.

They were just about to creep quietly away, when on the night air a thrilling, ear-splitting cry rang out. It was the war-whoop of the Sioux!

In an instant seven warriors roused themselves and sprang to their feet. Seeing the two white men, they seized their weapons and sprang toward them.

"Fire, and spare not!" cried Buffalo Bill, bringing his rifle to his shoulder. "We shall be outnumbered if they close with us. For a moment we have the advantage."

And, suiting the action to the word, he sent the contents of his rifle straight at the foremost savage.

## CHAPTER II.

### A TOUGH FIGHT—THE ESCAPE.

The redskin who had been shot lay upon the ground, the blood welling from his wound.

Six warriors hurled themselves at Buffalo Bill and Dare, when again the rifle spoke, and although one brave yelled out and dropped back, he was only slightly wounded, and continued, after a moment, to fight.

A tomahawk came whizzing by Buffalo Bill's arm, the blade shaving through his coat.

A blow from the scout's rifle-butt beat off the man, but two others, armed with knives, leaped upon him, and a struggle for life began.

Dare shot one of these men with his revolver, and Buffalo Bill was enabled to grip the other by the arm that held the knife and by the throat.

While he and the Indians were struggling a curious thing happened.

One of the Indians who had been so dead asleep as not to have awoke at the first noise, sprang to his feet, tomahawk in hand.

The first thing he saw was an Indian—one of his companions—standing by the fire, taking aim with his rifle at Dare's head.

Still half asleep, and thinking this must be an enemy, the Indian, without a moment's hesitation, sprang upon the man with the rifle, and with one blow of his tomahawk dashed out his brains.

As the body fell the man recognized his own companion and saw what he had done, when, with a yell of horror, he dashed up to Dare, who was gallantly attempting to defend himself against three attackers.

Above the din of the fight the Indian whom Buffalo Bill had decoyed and bound continued to utter most piercing whoops, which cries were answered by his companions.

Dare was able for a minute to keep his enemies at bay with his revolver; but when the man who had unwittingly killed his own comrade joined the other three they all together flung themselves upon him, and, weak as he was, he could offer little resistance.

They got him onto the ground, and, while two held him, another coolly loaded a rifle, and, walking up to the prisoner, placed the muzzle to his head, with the intention of blowing out his brains.

Buffalo Bill, though, had seen his friend's danger, and, making a prodigious effort, had forced the brave's arm



back until the knife was prevented from doing any damage, and all the while he had gripped the man's throat until his eyes were almost starting from his head.

Then, with a sudden movement, he released the Indian's throat, tore the knife from his grasp, buried it in his chest, and springing away as his enemy's clutch relaxed, leaped to his feet.

Poising the blood-stained knife a moment in his hand, he hurled it with all his strength, the point striking between the shoulders of the Indian with the rifle, the blade was buried to the hilt in the man's back.

The rifle exploded, and so close to Dare's head that the flash singed his hair; but as the Indian sank to the ground with a groan the bullet zipped into the earth.

Swinging his terrible rifle, which he had now recovered, Buffalo Bill beat in the skull of one of the men who held Dare, when the others, terrified at the slaughter of their companions, with wild yells darted off into the darkness.

"My horse," said the scout.

"If they discover him we are lost again, for our means of escape will be cut off."

"Where is it?"

"Go ahead, old chap; I'm much better," said Dare.

"I can run, I think."

Away they went, a couple of shots coming after them from the Indians who had run away.

But when they got out of the reflection cast by the fire no more shots were fired at them.

It was a good distance to the horse, but at last the animal was seen quietly awaiting his master's return.

"We're all right now," cried Buffalo Bill. "Up into the saddle."

As Dare mounted, the scout threw himself on the ground and listened.

"They're following us," he said. "They think we're on foot and they will track us down."

He had hardly spoken when two flashes spit out from behind them, and a sharp pain in his left arm told Buffalo Bill he was wounded.

"Quick, Dare! they're closer than I thought. Give me a hand up—so. Now straight ahead at top speed."

The animal, though it bore a double burden, made a gallant effort, and away they went, Dare in front, and Buffalo Bill holding on around his waist.

Glancing back from time to time, they saw a couple of dark forms racing behind them, but there was little chance of their being overtaken.

Buffalo Bill, with his wounded arm, was unable to use his rifle, or he would have made the braves regret their tenacity.

The horse, however, making good speed, bore them out of danger, and after a couple of hours they both dismounted.

The first thing to be done was to see to Buffalo Bill's wound.

This was found to be a nasty rip in the forearm, the bullet having ploughed up the flesh pretty deeply.

It was bound up in the scout's handkerchief, when he said:

"I can spare a drop of blood; it will keep my brain clear."

"There's the risk of fever," said Dare.

"Not with me; my blood is pure enough; but how on

earth did you manage to get into the hands of those rascals, and how has the world been treating you since I last saw you? It must be sixteen years ago."

"It was more. My daughter was a baby. But first let me thank you for the service you have just done me. I shall never be able to repay you."

"That you can't say; and, besides, between such old friends as we are there should be no mention of repaying."

"In the old days, when we were both in the Seventh Kansas Cavalry, we had many a narrow shave together."

"True, Cody, and I often think of it."

"How is your wife?"

"It's just about her I have been worrying my heart out."

"I had to go down South to see about some business for her, and left her and the youngsters all safe and well."

"I was detained down there longer than I anticipated, and while I was away this Indian outbreak began."

"I hurried back to be on the spot, in case of accidents, for, as you know, our place is pretty close to the Bad Lands, when, as Fate would have it, my horse stepped into an ants' hole and broke his leg off short below the knee."

"There was nothing for it but to shoot the poor brute, and, carrying saddle and bridle, I started on foot."

"All went well till last night, when I was within fifty miles of my place, when I was surprised while asleep at night, and, though I resisted as long as I could, was overpowered and taken prisoner."

"You should not have made such a big fire, old man, knowing Indians were in the neighborhood."

"How do you know I made a big fire?"

"I saw your camp, saw the signs of a struggle, followed your trail, and was thus enabled to rescue you."

Leonard Dare looked at the scout admiringly.

"You are a marvel," he said.

"Pooh! it's my trade. But, anyhow, it was lucky I chanced upon you, for if you'd once got to the Sioux villages, nothing short of a miracle could have saved you."

"I suppose not. And now I'm all anxiety to get on to Richmond Ranch, my home."

"Till I know my wife and children are safe I shall know no rest."

Buffalo Bill made no reply, but he had a sinking sensation at his heart, for he knew that Dare's big farm, Richmond Ranch, lay in the track of Indians coming from the reservations of the Crees toward the Bad Lands, and they would spare neither age nor sex on their devastating march.

A few mouthfuls of dried buffalo meat were eaten, and then, mounting, they pushed on again, sunrise finding them many miles from the scene of their night's adventure.

The horse, having a double load to carry, and both big men, made progress necessarily slow, and occasionally one or the other or both of them would walk, to rest the animal, and in this way they pushed on until nearly midday, without having seen any one or anything to alarm their suspicion.

At last they entered the valley in which Richmond Ranch stood.



Eaten up with anxiety, Leonard Dare pushed forward, Buffalo Bill, who was on foot, having some difficulty in keeping up with him.

Across the well-cleared ground they went, around by the little stream, and then into the winding drive that led to the house.

Dare had gone on ahead, and the scout was throwing keen glances from side to side as he hurried after his friend, when suddenly he uttered a cry, ran into a border of laurel, and, falling on his knees, picked up an object, which he carefully examined.

It was a piece of colored wampum, and some damp, sticky substance was smeared on it.

No second glance was required to tell the scout what it was.

The wampum was part of an Indian chief's adornment, and it was smeared with blood!

Casting his eyes around, Buffalo Bill saw the track of moccasined feet—one, two, ten, a hundred.

Oh, Heaven! the worst must have happened.

He arose to his feet, a chilly feeling at his heart, when footsteps came crashing through the flowers and shrubs toward him, and Leonard Dare, his face pale as a corpse, his eyes bloodshot, and his whole form shaking with excitement, staggered toward the scout.

"Cody! Cody!" he gasped.

"Good Heaven, they've been here! The house is in ruins! Help me!"

### CHAPTER III

#### DARE REGISTERS A VOW.

The agonized appearance of his old friend went straight to Cody's heart; he needed no such appeal, in fact, as he sprang forward and grasped Dare's hand.

"Take heart, old chap!" he cried.

"Bear up. Things may not be so black as they look. You stop here, and I'll go and have a look around."

Stunned and dazed, Leonard Dare sank to the ground, and the scout strode off toward the house.

He saw his horse just where Dare had left it, and there in front of him stood the ruins of Richmond Ranch.

It had been hacked and battered; part of it had been set on fire; furniture had been thrown out of the window and smashed; cattle had been ruthlessly slaughtered, and where once had stood a fine house and outbuildings nothing was to be seen now but a total wreck.

Buffalo Bill steeled his heart and went forward.

Indian signs abounded on all sides, and every here and there little pools of blood gave ominous proof of a struggle having been waged.

Inside the house the scene defied description.

To Buffalo Bill, who had only seen it once, when handsome Mrs. Dare and two bonnie children made the place bright with love and laughter, the scene was one of overpowering sadness, but what would it have been to poor Leonard Dare, the husband and the father, no man could say.

From room to room the scout went, reading only too well the sad tale.

The place had been taken by surprise, and the Indians had gained an entrance. Roused from their beds, the

hands had made some resistance, but had been overpowered, and either slain or taken prisoners.

From the appearance of the sleeping apartments of the women, it appeared that they had dressed, and had either attempted to escape, or had been immediately seized.

Two dead bodies—those of an elderly woman and of a little boy—were found, both brained by tomahawks.

In the wing that had been burned there were the remains of several bodies, charred and perfectly unrecognizable, and one man, who was half buried under a heap of rubbish, had signs of the Indians having perpetrated horrible atrocities on him, probably torturing him to death.

The next thing was to examine the trail of the Indians, and this Buffalo Bill did most carefully, and the conclusion he drew gave him a ray of hope.

He returned to Dare, who sat where he had been left, looking the very picture of despair.

"What news—what hope, Cody?" he asked, with the eagerness of a drowning man who catches at a straw.

"Bad news, but some hope, Dare. Be a man; bear up, and remember if you cannot save, you must avenge."

"Oh, Heaven, Heaven!" groaned the unhappy man, "and has it come to this? It's only ten years ago I brought her here a happy bride."

He buried his face in his hands, and sobbed as only a man can. Then for a few minutes he was silent, and Buffalo Bill left him, feeling himself too much affected to speak.

Suddenly Leonard Dare leaped to his feet, and, crossing to Buffalo Bill, seized him by the hand.

"Cody," he said, "you were always a true friend; help me now, and I will bless you all my life."

"That's right, Dare; be a man, and you can count on me to the death."

"Tell me what—happened."

"As far as I can see the Indians took the place by surprise, and there was little or no resistance till they were in the house. Then all those who resisted were slain, the women were captured, and the place given over to pillage and fire."

"There are—no—bodies—you know!"

"None, save one or two of the men, who possibly showed fight, an old woman and a boy."

"Ah, a boy! Who—not my William?"

"I should say not," said Buffalo Bill, embarrassed by the question; "but you can see for yourself."

Slowly the two men advanced toward the house, Dare saying never a word.

The place where the bodies were was reached, and Dare looked down upon him.

"Poor little chap!" he said. "He was the son of one of the farmhands, and used to play with my own children."

Then, suddenly seizing Buffalo Bill's arm, he said: "Come, the place stifles me!"

They went out, and Dare took two spades from a heap of implements which lay in a shed.

He and Buffalo Bill then silently started and dug a good-sized grave some distance from the house, and into this the remains of the murdered people were placed.

After the grave was filled in, Dare placed a heap of stones on it; then, falling on his knees beside it, he raised



his clinched hands and pale face to the sky, and while his voice vibrated with the intensity of emotion, he prayed:

"Father of Heaven, Just Master, have mercy upon me! Guide me to the rescue of my loved ones, or, if they live no more, give me strength to avenge them! Listen, Lord, to the prayer of a broken-hearted man, and grant me their lives; but if it is Thy will to take them, let mine be the arm to avenge them."

For some minutes more his lips moved, though no sound escaped them, and Buffalo Bill stood by with bared head, awed by the intensity of that strong man's passion.

Dare arose to his feet and said to the scout:

"I am ready; let us start."

The work of picking up the trail was commenced, and Buffalo Bill was busy for more than a hour.

At length he seemed satisfied in his mind, and started off on foot, Dare following, leading the horse.

In this fashion several miles were made, until they came to a narrow stream, which, in the summer, was simply a dried-up watercourse, but which then was of considerable breadth.

It was easily forded, however, and the two crossed.

On the opposite bank Buffalo Bill examined the trail very minutely, going to and fro, and up and down, moving with caution so as not to obliterate a mark, and often studying on his hands and knees a sign for several minutes.

At last he turned to Dare, who watched him without saying a word.

A smile was on the scout's face.

"There is hope for you," he said. "Three white women were with the Indians, besides one or two men. One of the women wore well-made, pointed-toed shoes, with a high, level heel, such as your wife would wear in the house; the other two wore broad, flat-heeled boots, and one had one foot in a stocking only."

"You can see all that?" said Dare, with an eager catch in his voice.

"Decidedly; and so can you. Come here!"

They both knelt, and Buffalo Bill showed Dare, on the soft earth by the bank of the stream, the footmarks he had seen; but they were so trodden over and around by the footmarks of the Indians, that Dare could not see so clearly as the scout.

"There are also several children with them," said Buffalo Bill.

"One, I should say, was a boy, and the others may be girls; but I am not sure."

"Oh, God, I thank Thee for this ray of hope!" said Dare, and they moved forward.

Hour after hour they followed the trail, which from time to time Buffalo Bill stooped and scrutinized, until at last he turned again to Dare:

"There is a little boy with the Indians, and he is in charge of a brave who is kind to him."

"How on earth can you know that?"

"I notice that his footmarks when visible are always beside those of an Indian, who walks with a limp, or has an injured leg. Every now and then the boy's footmarks disappear, and the man's get deeper and heavier, that points to the fact that the boy is carried."

"Is that so?"

"I am certain of it. And this brave has taken a fancy to the boy, which is not uncommon, and so he carries him when he is tired."

"What else could he do?" asked Dare.

Buffalo Bill would have avoided the question, but Dare repeated it.

"In such cases," said the scout, gently, "many a child has had its brains beaten out and been thrown aside to the wolves."

Dare set his teeth, and then marched until the remains of a camp was seen, and Buffalo Bill examined every portion of it.

The ashes of the fire, the bones, the marks on the earth, the spot from which fuel had been cut, and the pool from which water had been obtained—all these came in for their share of attention.

"Everything goes to prove what I have said," he explained to Dare.

"The Indians are another party of Sioux. They are pretty numerous, and are under several chiefs."

"The female prisoners had a sort of shelter made for them, and possibly the children, too; the men were tied to poles and lay there," pointing to a spot where the scant grass was much worn.

"What will be the fate of the captives?"

"The children will probably be adopted into the tribe."

"And the women?"

"Goodness knows."

"And the men?"

"Will probably die at the stake."

"As I thought. And the women will be given as wives to the chiefs, though you will not say so. Let us push on."

"We must rest; it will do no good overexerting our strength. We must be ready to act in an instant if required."

"I am ready at any moment."

It was very cold during the night, and snow fell heavily. Buffalo Bill was delighted.

"This snow is a godsend!" he cried.

"How?"

"It will show the trail plainly. We can follow it on horseback and shall soon overtake them; though when we do, what we are going to do I can't say yet."

"Of course we cannot alone attack a hundred of them."

"I care not," said Dare.

"I shall go straight ahead and join them; so long as I am with my own people, I don't care."

"That would be worse than foolish," said the scout, kindly.

"We must do better than that. If you cannot help them as a free man, do you think you could do any good as a prisoner?"

"We shall see."

With the first streaks of light they pushed on, and all day stuck to it in a way that would have exhausted twice over any ordinary men; but the scout was a man of iron, and the intense excitement under which Dare labored did not let him feel hunger, cold, or fatigue.

Toward night they came upon the marks of the Indians' camp of the day before, and, running quickly around it, Buffalo Bill uttered a cry of delight.



"They are exactly one day's march on from us," he cried.

"They were overtaken by the snow in their camp last night, just as we were. Hurrah! now we are sure of them."

"How so?"

"Why, they will make a big, broad trail on the snow, and, as little has fallen during the day, it won't be covered up. We can follow it at speed on horseback, and shall soon know what to expect."

"Yes, that's right; let us on then in God's name."

Hour after hour they pushed forward, now both mounted on the horse, the trail being easily followed in the moonlight.

Dare seemed capable of going on forever without tiring, but Buffalo Bill knew the importance of keeping fit, and insisted upon a short halt.

Long before it was light, however, they were on the move again, reaching a place where the party they were following had made a halt.

Buffalo Bill made the usual inspection of the spot, and after some minutes went off in a direction away from the original trail.

"There's been a bit of a split here," he said to Dare.

"Never mind that; let us push on after the prisoners."

"It seems here they were divided," said Buffalo Bill.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, among the tracks left I can't see that of the little boy, but the limping man went off by himself due west."

"What has that got to do with it?"

"He may have the boy with him."

"Ha! so he may, but then my wife—my poor wife, I must think first of her," and he started off on the trail again.

Buffalo Bill bade him pause.

"I think I should follow this trail a bit," he said. "It may lead to something important."

"I don't know. I would rather pursue these wretches."

"If you'll be advised by me you'll turn off on this side trail. I have an idea it will be best."

"What are your reasons?"

"First, there is only one Indian, whom we can easily secure."

"He has had charge of the boy, and he may have him with him now; anyhow, we are sure to get some information from him about the prisoners, also particulars of the war party and of their destination. I advise you to follow the trail."

There was a struggle in Dare's mind for some minutes, then he said:

"As you will—you have been right so far; I will be guided by you to the end."

Away they set on the trail of the one man, and a couple of miles along it Buffalo Bill uttered an exclamation of satisfaction.

"Look! look!" he said.

"As I suspected, the brave has got the boy; there are his footsteps."

Dare saw the tiny footmarks beside the big ones, and examined them attentively; then, full of hope, they pushed on.

Daylight found them still on the trail, and nearing a deep ravine on rocky ground.

The footmarks led toward the south side of the ravine, and, Buffalo Bill, judging by the freshness of the trail, concluded they must be hot upon the man that they were following.

"You follow the trail on the horse, Dare, and I will keep you in sight, but move parallel with you on the flank. If you see an Indian, attempt to get into parley with him and speak him fair; I suppose you can speak a bit of the Sioux language?"

"A little; enough to make myself understood."

"Good, then; mind what you are about, and remember I shall have you in sight, and shall be ready to come to your assistance."

For nearly an hour after that Dare rode on until the trail led up the steep side of the ravine, and seemed to end abruptly at a large stone.

He was gazing around wondering what the meaning of this was, when a big, fierce-looking Indian suddenly appeared from behind the boulder, and, leveling a rifle, proceeded to take a steady aim at the horseman.

Seeing him, and remembering Buffalo Bill's instructions, Dare held the palms of his hands toward the Indian in sign of peace, calling out that he was a friend.

The Indian paused a moment, then dropped his rifle, again to lift it, and take a steady look along the sights.

"Hold your fire, redskin, I am a friend," yelled Dare.

"White man no friend to Injun," said the warrior, in a guttural voice.

"What for follow?"

"I want to see the little boy you have with you."

"Boy, boy, what for you want boy; go or Tee-cum-dah fire."

"Don't do that; let us palaver."

"Palaver no good; go, red man no want talk paleface."

At this moment a tall figure appeared on the skyline just behind Tee-cum-dah and a voice cried:

"Lay down your rifle, Indian, or you are a dead man."

The redskin turned to see Buffalo Bill taking deadly aim at him with his rifle.

"Treachery," said the Indian.

"You shall die, paleface," and he fired at Dare.

The shot missed the mark, but the horse fell, bringing Dare to the ground.

Before Tee-cum-dah could reload Buffalo Bill sprang toward him, and, pointing his rifle full at his heart, he commanded him to throw down his gun.

"Fire!" said the Indian, folding his arms.

"Tee-cum-dah is not a squaw."

Dare freed himself from the horse and also made for the Indian, who stood immovable, though there was a strange glitter in his eye.

At that moment there was a childish scream of delight, and a little flaxen-headed boy darted into view, and, running toward Dare, cried:

"Papa, do not kill Tee-cum-dah; he has been so kind to me; he is a good Indian."

"My boy!" cried Dare, catching up the little fellow and straining him to his breast—"my dear boy, Heaven be thanked that you at least are saved."

All four stood a moment motionless, then Buffalo Bill



advanced to the Indian, his rifle held by the muzzle in his left hand, his right hand extended in welcome.

"Tee-cum-dah," he said, "let there be peace between us; the white men are not ungrateful; they owe you thanks."

Tee-cum-dah took the hand.

"The Great Spirit can see Tee-cum-dah's heart. He knows there is no anger in it.

"Tee-cum-dah will smoke with his pale brother."

They shook hands, and then little Willie Dare ran up and took the red man's hand.

"This is my papa," he said, pointing to Dare.

"He will give you lots of things for being kind to me."

The Indian took no notice.

"Why don't you put me on your shoulder like you used to?" said the boy.

"Why are you so stern now?"

"Wagh! Tee-cum-dah has lost the little 'Saraquat.'"

"Not so. Saraquat will love you just the same.

"You shall go home with me and daddy, and we'll all be happy.

"You shall teach me to shoot and be a hunter, and take scalps and all; only we'll live with papa."

"Tee-cum-dah," said Buffalo Bill, "you are a great warrior. I am a great warrior, too; we will smoke and talk."

"Follow," said the Indian, and, leading the way behind the big boulder, he entered a small cave in which a fire of dry moss was burning.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE PARTY FALL IN WITH A STRANGE TROOP.

There was food inside this cave, and the Indian offered it to the guests who were indeed in want of it, and ate thankfully.

Buffalo Bill was well versed in Indian etiquette, and not a word was said during the meal; that being finished, a pipe was produced, filled with tobacco, and the Indian, smoking first, it was handed to Buffalo Bill and Dare in turns, who, after each had puffed, passed it back to Tee-cum-dah.

"Wagh!" began the latter.

"The ax has been dug up, the chiefs at the council have ordered the dog dance to be danced, the warriors have gone out for scalps; why do we talk?"

"My brother's heart is angry," said Buffalo Bill.

"We talk because we wish to bury the hatchet; there is no anger in the hearts of the palefaces toward Tee-cum-dah.

"They are angry only with those who have done wrongly and broken the peace."

"Wagh! it was the paleface who drove us to war.

"The Sioux nation would have kept peace."

This was not true, and Buffalo Bill knew it, but he did not want to further irritate the Indian, who, he saw, might be useful.

Knowing how true it is that a soft answer turneth away wrath, he said:

"Our red brother doubtless knows these things better than we do, but there is at least peace between us. He has saved the son of the white chief," pointing to Dare.

"The white men would like to learn particulars of this, and also find out something of the other prisoners."

"Saraquat," this was the name the Indian had given little Dare—"Saraquat has the glib tongue of a squaw; let him speak."

Thus asked, the lad, nestling to the big, ugly Indian, said:

"I remember it all. Me and Emmy was woke up in the night by the noise; such awful shrieking and shouting you never heard—just like the red men do when they're mad, and then mamma came running into our room——"

"Boy," said Dare, unable to control his emotion, "where is your mother?"

"She's with the Indians, and Emmy and Jem Blake and Hugh Evans, and——"

"That's enough," said the poor father. "Is she unhurt?"

"Oh, yes. Big Horse, that's what they call the chief, mamma belongs to him now. He looks after her, and so does Sitting Short Bull."

Dare's face turned deadly pale, and his eyes blazed as he turned to Tee-cum-dah.

"Is this true?" he asked.

"Wagh! Saraquat has spoken. His tongue is not forked."

"Which chief claims her?" asked Buffalo Bill.

"Both claim her. It will be settled by a council at our lodges."

"Cheer up!" said Buffalo Bill to Dare. "The best that could have happened has happened. Before they can settle the matter we must rescue her."

Then Willie Dare went on with his narrative.

"When mamma came into our room she talked quick, and we dressed; then all the men started letting off guns, and Emmy and me went to the window, and she began to cry.

"Little Tommy Blake, who was in the next room, went out on the stairs, and Mrs. Wilson took him with her.

"Then mamma took me and Emmy, and we went to the top of the stairs, when a lot of Indians, with such awful faces and feathers, all came yelling and dashing up; and then poor little Tommy Blake screamed out, and mamma rushed back with us, but the Indians came after us, and they pulled us about, and did hurt poor mamma. She screamed, and——"

"Peace, boy—peace, for Heaven's sake. You will drive me mad!" cried Dare, jumping up.

Tee-cum-dah smoked silently, not a muscle of his face moving.

"They didn't mind much," said Willie, "and then they tied mamma and Emmy, and she was taken away; and a lot more Indians came, and I was by myself, and Tee-cum-dah, who was shot in the leg, came up and was going to hit me with his chopper.

"I looked up, and his face was painted so funny with a white skeleton's head on his cheek, and as he bawled out the head seemed to grow long; so, although I was awfully frightened, I couldn't help laughing.

"Then he put away his chopper and caught hold of my hand, and I've been with him ever since."

The Indian broke silence.

"Tee-cum-dah would have killed Saraquat and taken



his scalp, but he looked up and laughed, and the Great Spirit whispered to the warrior not to kill, so he took Saraquat for his son."

"And he is so funny! He can shoot arrows like anything and make such funny noises, and he can give you fine rides, only his leg's bad, and he gets tired."

The idea of the stern, ugly-looking Indian making noises to amuse the child and carrying him when he was tired was so strange as to seem impossible to any who did not know, as Buffalo Bill did, that often redskins get very attached to white children, and will bring them up with all the love and tenderness of a father.

After a short silence, Buffalo Bill spoke:

"Tee-cum-dah is a great warrior. He has saved the life of a paleface child, and the child's father is not ungrateful. Tee-cum-dah must bury the hatchet."

Dare held out his hand to the Indian, who took it.

"You have done me a service," said the former, "and as long as you live you shall never regret it."

"When these troubles are over, come and live on my farm, and you shall have everything you want to make you comfortable for the rest of your life."

"The words of my white brother are good. Tee-cum-dah will come and live with his friends?" said Buffalo Bill.

Not a muscle of the Indian's face moved.

"Tee-cum-dah will die in the midst of his tribe and will lie with his fathers. His heart is red, and he does not love the paleface."

Buffalo Bill tried further argument, but to no avail.

The Indian arose, and drew his robe around him.

"Tee-cum-dah is not angry with his white brother," he said: "he will not harm him. He had reasons for leaving his people, and was going straight to their lodges, and he was taking Saraquat with him to leave him with his squaw. Now Tee-cum-dah will go back to his people. Will Saraquat go with him?"

The boy, thus appealed to, looked from one to the other.

"Will you take me back to mamma?" he said.

"We shall go to our people," said Tee-cum-dah.

"But you will be a prisoner, boy," said Dare, in anxiety.

"Like poor mamma?" said Willie to Tee-cum-dah. "I like you very much, but I would rather stay with papa."

"There is peace between us," said Tee-cum-dah, and without another word he stepped out of the cave and stalked away.

"Well, I admire a straight man," said Buffalo Bill, "and it's a bad sign when a man turns against his own nation, be he redskin or paleface."

"Still, I would rather have made a friend of him."

"It can't be helped."

"There's no accounting for Indians, and he'll probably do us some good. Remember, we had him at our mercy, and we spared him."

"That will count for something; and, besides, you've recovered your son."

"I don't forget that mercy. But what shall we do with him?"

"He will never be able to stand the fatigue of journeying with us, and to carry him will tire us."

"It's a pity that chap shot the horse."

"It can't be helped, but our plans will have to be altered a bit."

"Tee-cum-dah will reach his people as soon as we can, and he'll put them on their guard. We shall have to think of some other way of circumventing the beggars."

"But I won't give up the search for my wife."

"If there were ten thousand Indians in the path, I would still go on."

Buffalo Bill saw that Dare was a man rather difficult to deal with, and that his recent sorrow had a little unhinged him.

He made no reply, but some time afterward they started, and returning along their own trail, continued their pursuit.

During the day little Willie got fearfully tired.

In turn, Buffalo Bill and Dare carried him, but the progress was rather slow, and Dare was quick to perceive it.

That night Buffalo Bill made a proposal.

"Tee-cum-dah said his people were making for their lodges," he said; "their lodges are away up somewhere on the upper reach of the Yellowstone River."

"They are always moving," replied Dare.

"Just so; but they will be sure to remain somewhere on the banks at this season of the year."

"Now they are going by a very roundabout way, as I should think, to keep out of the way of any troops who may be coming down from Fort Abraham Lincoln."

"Well?"

"In this case I propose that we make a cut across country and strike the Yellowstone."

"We can then make a rough canoe and get up stream to the lodges, and may then find out something about the prisoners, and perhaps get a chance of effecting a rescue, when a boat would be of the greatest value."

"It's a good idea," said Dare, "and I'm perfectly agreeable. It will relieve us of carrying poor little Will, too."

So it was arranged, and they altered their course accordingly.

For two days they kept on, and then one night, while they were taking a few hours' rest, the weather still being very severe, they were alarmed at hearing a terrible din, the noise plainly coming toward them. Buffalo Bill listened, and he and Dare saw to their arms.

The shouts of men, the tramp of horses and an occasional shot were heard, which all told of a fight being in progress. Presently in the moonlight Buffalo Bill saw a long line of mounted men coming toward them, and he concealed himself in order to the more closely observe them.

Soon he saw them quite plainly, and, to his astonishment, saw they were United States cavalrymen.

There was no mistaking their uniforms and arms, and Buffalo Bill, rushing from his hiding-place, called out to the foremost trooper to stop.

The man, however, only shouted out to him to stand aside, and on the scout not obeying, threatened him with his revolver.

Buffalo Bill called up Dare, and together they waved their arms, and at last prevailed upon an officer to stop.

"What on earth is the matter?" asked Buffalo Bill. "Why are you all galloping away in this frantic manner?"



The officer stared at the scout, and cried:

"Don't you belong to us? We've had a dust with the reds, and they've given us a most infernal licking!" and away he went.

Another man Buffalo Bill stopped cried out:

"You'd best git on a 'oss, stranger. The reds are on our track, shootin' like thunder!"

This appeared to be the case, for the shots were plainly heard.

There were several riderless horses among the rabble, and one of these Buffalo Bill succeeded in capturing.

On it he mounted Dare and his little son, intending to catch another horse for himself.

But the riderless horses were so mixed up with the others, and the men were so panic-stricken, that Buffalo Bill was twice almost ridden down.

Before he had time to effect his purpose the tail end of the rout had passed him, and he found himself alone on foot in the midst of a band of savages hanging on the flanks and rear of the terror-stricken cavalry, like wolves after a wounded buffalo.

## CHAPTER V.

### ORDER RESTORED.

To remain in the open where the scout stood was simply to court disaster, so he immediately ran to the shelter of the trees.

As he did so a yell sounded in his ears, and a couple of savages forced their wiry horses from under the shadow of the trees and came toward him, firing as they advanced.

Racing at top speed, the scout ran away, going in a line at right-angles to that pursued by the demoralized troopers, and leading the Indians right away from their companions who had followed after the troopers.

Buffalo Bill's pursuers fired at him several times, but their aim from the saddle was uncertain and the light was deceptive, hence the scout was unhurt.

Being a splendid runner, Buffalo Bill was enabled to keep ahead for a considerable distance; then he suddenly appeared to stumble heavily to the ground.

With a whoop of glee the foremost Indian galloped toward him; but when he was not more than ten yards away there was a flash, a report, and the brave reeled from his saddle with a bullet in his breast.

The mustang, however, galloped on, going straight for the scout, who suddenly leaped to his feet, caught the bridle as the horse passed him, and vaulted into the saddle.

The second Indian, who saw what had happened, again fired at the scout, but succeeded only in grazing the flanks of the horse, rendering him nearly mad with fright.

He dashed away, and Buffalo Bill had to exert all his skill to keep his seat, such was the temper of the beast.

Buffalo Bill, though, was a rider in a thousand, and though partially disabled in one arm, he kept such a grip with his knees, and used his big spurs with such effect, that the brute's temper was quelled.

The danger was that he might dash after his late companions, and thus carry Buffalo Bill right into the midst of his foes.

But, fortunately, he went in a different direction, and

after a time the scout quieted him sufficiently to guide him.

When he looked around all signs of the second Indian had disappeared; so, being guided by the noise of the pursuit, which he could still hear plainly, Buffalo Bill pressed on after his companions.

By keeping well to the right of the pursuers, he was enabled to pass the Indians, when he gradually closed in until he was again with the soldiers. By chance he found himself close to Dare.

"Ha! here you are," said the latter. "I was beginning to wonder what had become of you."

"I had a little experience," replied Buffalo Bill, grimly.

"But what on earth are these fellows going to do? If they only turned and presented a bold front to the redskins they could hold them in check."

"They are simply nerveless. They must have had a bad experience somewhere."

"Who's in command, I wonder? We must stop this, at any rate; it's a disgrace to our colors."

Buffalo Bill managed to get to the head of the rout, and saw one or two officers, but could not tell which was the superior.

He fell back to the rear again, and was just in time to witness a tragedy.

A trooper had his horse shot under him, and both fell to the ground and were left behind.

Several Indians pounced upon them, and the man's brains were dashed out and his scalp torn from his head.

"Comrades, comrades," cried Buffalo Bill, "do you call yourselves men, and allow such things to be done under your very noses? Come, pull yourselves together!"

But the men only muttered some reply about pushing on, and Buffalo Bill again spurred forward.

He found an officer who, by his shoulder badge, he saw was a captain.

"If we go on in this way, sir," he said, "by daybreak not a score of men will be left."

"What can I do?" said the officer. "If you can stop the men, stop 'em."

"I will. Is there a trumpeter here?"

"Who are you, though?"

"My name is Cody, and I'm chief of the scouts to the United States Army, with the rank of major, so I think I can claim command here."

"What! are you Buffalo Bill?"

"That is what I'm sometimes called."

Just then the scout saw a trumpeter—a mere lad—pressing forward with the rest.

"Here, boy, sound the halt."

"What, sir?" said the trumpeter, in a voice of doubt.

"Sound the halt, or give me your bugle, and I will."

The boy placed the instrument to his lips and blew a faint call.

Loose as was the discipline, the men mechanically drew rein.

Buffalo Bill reached out for the bugle, and placing it to his mouth, ripped out the halt in a determined manner. The men paused, and the scout sounded the "attention" call.

Dare came up, all his old military instinct roused by the well-known call.



"Gallop along to the head of the column, Dare, and prevent any one from straggling," said Buffalo Bill, "then return to me."

The ex-soldier did so, and Buffalo Bill cried in ringing tones:

"Now, my lads, take heart; help is at hand! Close in, save your spurs, and get your ammunition ready."

The men obeyed, and the Indians, thinking some move was going forward, although from every bit of cover they kept popping away, did not attempt to advance.

The men got calmer, and recovered their reason a little, the officers regained some sort of authority over them, and order was beginning to reign again.

Buffalo Bill dismounted some of them, and bidding them bring the axes—which certain men in every troop of cavalry carried—he sent them to cut down some saplings.

With the rest of the mounted men, now in good order, he covered their occupation and kept the enemy in check. Twice the Indians essayed an advance in force, but were repulsed with a galling fire, losing heavily each time.

This was not at all according to redskin ideas of warfare, and they retired out of sight altogether.

This advantage, slight as it was, put fresh spirit into the soldiers, and they set about their tasks with renewed energy.

The officers assisted, and soon all were busily at work.

Crossing a suitable spot where there was a spring of water, Buffalo Bill made a defense with felled trees, the horses being placed in the center.

The men were apportioned duties, a watch was set, and something like discipline was preserved.

A number of men, tired out, fell asleep at once, while others, now that immediate danger was past, lit up their pipes and enjoyed a quiet smoke.

Captain Cornish was one of these, and he approached Buffalo Bill.

"I say, Cody," he said, "it was a godsend for us, picking you up, or we should have been wiped out to a man."

"But what on earth were you doing out here?"

"I was on the trail of a big war party, but what on earth were you doing, captain?"

"Heaven only knows."

"We'd lost our heads, and that's a fact."

"Yesterday afternoon we attacked two villages of Sioux Indians, thinking we were going to knock spots off 'em; but they fought like tigers, and instead of about five hundred men, as we expected, the beggars turned out over a thousand strong, and when we had just as much as we could do to hold our own, a whole host of red devils that one of our men said were Crees, came charging down upon us, and we were rolled up like paper."

"We fought as long as we could, but against such odds we were no good, and our general—Crook—gave the word to retire, which we did in good order at first; but at last, so hotly were we pushed, that we had to go for our lives, leaving over a hundred dead behind us."

"It's a thousand pities such a thing should have occurred," said Buffalo Bill. "To have died to a man would have been bad enough, but to run away from them—it's awful."

"It will give them more confidence than anything else; there will be no holding them now."

"Mark my words, we shall have trouble with them before they've done; there will be something happen that will make people turn pale."

"We did our best," said Captain Cornish, somewhat sharply.

"There's no blame to be attached to any one."

"Don't feel offended. I'm only thinking of the effect it will have; besides, the whole country behind us is now unprotected."

"That's a fact. However, we'll give them a lesson yet that will last them some time, or my name's not Cornish."

During the remainder of the night they were not disturbed, but in the morning the Indians made several attempts upon them, but, thanks to the shelter they now enjoyed, these were beaten off.

Buffalo Bill had set the men to work with the few spades they possessed, and their position was now fairly strong.

The old military spirit had been aroused in Dare, and for a time he forgot his great trouble in the bustle and activity of his early life.

The horses were so fatigued that to move the following day was out of the question, so Buffalo Bill determined to rest the whole day and to move early the following morning.

Their greatest trial was want of food and exposure to the cold, the weather keeping exceptionally severe, snow falling continually.

The Indians tried several tactics during the day, but the scout was too wary for them, and each time they were beaten off with loss, until at last they seemed to give it up as a bad job.

"It won't do to remain here too long, though," said Buffalo Bill.

"Depend upon it, they sent off at once to their villages to tell their comrades they had us and to get help."

"They'll come on in overwhelming numbers to-morrow, and every day we stay here we shall get weaker."

"At three in the morning we must move."

And so it happened, the men saddling up and mounting as quietly as possible, and then, knocking out one side of their intrenchments, moving off as quietly as they could.

The enemy heard them, though, and came sweeping down upon them, but the scout had managed to restore their wonted courage to the troops, and such was the reception the redskins got that they kept at a safe distance, hanging on their trail like wolves, and woe to the unfortunate stragglers who fell into their hands.

The line of retreat was due east, toward Fort Abraham Lincoln, where it was believed troops were massing.

Day after day went by, always the enemy hanging on their heels, killing every day one or two, and occasionally swooping down and inflicting some damage, but always met by the starved and famished men with a firm front.

Always suffering the gnawing pangs of hunger, and often of thirst, which they would allay by eating mouthfuls of snow, the little band kept on, occasionally shooting a horse, which would be a mere racket of bones, the flesh of which would be devoured raw, and often having to fight for their lives while eating that repulsive meal even.



The strain told on the men, and day by day they got a little weaker and a little more despondent, until things began to wear a very ugly look.

Buffalo Bill and Dare compared views on the subject, and they agreed that unless something soon turned up, or they fell in with Custer's command, which should be starting from Fort Abraham Lincoln, there was not much chance of their getting through alive.

"We want some one to go right on to the fort, riding as light as possible, and hurry out some help to us," said Buffalo Bill.

"That is so, but there's not a horse that is fit for the journey."

"That Indian horse that I've got is good for anything."

"Reared in the rough Indian fashion, it thrives and fattens where these troop-horses starve, and, used to making long journeys, he keeps fresh and fit."

"So do you, Cody."

"Your training has been as severe as that of an Indian mustang, and it tells at times like this."

"I'd guarantee to get to the fort inside two days."

"We can't be more than a hundred and twenty miles away now, but I dare not leave the men; they'd lose their heads, and then it would be all up with them."

Dare thought a moment, then he said:

"Cody, if I had that horse, I could get through."

"Since you know when—I don't know what it is to get tired. My mind is in such a ferment that my body does not trouble me at all; day and night I can keep on the go."

"Dare, if you'll undertake the journey, you'll save us."

"Without vanity I can say that you and I, among the men we've got with us, are the only two that could hope for success."

"There's only one thing. I don't like leaving Will."

"Leave him to me."

"I promise you his welfare shall be my especial care, and if you should fail, I'll be a father to him."

More conversation on this head followed, and Dare made up his mind to undertake the journey.

That night he slept for four hours, then mounting the mustang, without a word to any one, save Buffalo Bill, Dare rode off into the darkness.

From the night Dare disappeared things got from bad to worse.

The marches got shorter and shorter, the horses weaker, the men more despondent, and the Indians more bold and venturesome.

At last Buffalo Bill determined to form a camp at the first favorable spot, and to wait there until either Dare returned with assistance, or the Indians once and for all proved their superiority.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE LAST CAMP.

It was clear to Buffalo Bill that further progress was out of the question. If they were attacked in force and with any vigor, the men were so fatigued that they could not resist.

Still, behind a good defense they might yet for a day or two defy their enemies, so, having reached a suitable spot, which was partly defended by a belt of trees, he formed

a camp, using the tree trunks for barriers and piling up snow between them, which soon froze into walls hard enough to resist a bullet.

A space in the center was cleared, the horses placed therein, and a quantity of wood for fires procured.

To feed the men was the first essential, and a horse, which was beyond further work, was slaughtered, when soon some juicy steaks were grilling over the fire; snow, melted in the one or two pannikins they possessed, provided them with plenty of water, and the fare, rough as it was, yet strengthened the famished troopers.

It was necessary to keep the most vigilant watch both day and night, for the bloodthirsty Sioux, fearful that, after all, their prey might escape them, were continually on the lookout to catch them napping.

Two days elapsed, during which time Buffalo Bill had never once closed his eyes in sleep.

By then several horses had been disposed of, but so nauseating had this food become that the men chewed bits of bark, leather straps, or pinches of tobacco, to stop the gnawing pains of hunger.

Several of them were down with frost bites, and for these nothing could be done; altogether, things were at a very serious pass.

During the second night a heavy fire was opened upon the camp from all sides, and soon the wild yells and whoops of the Indians proved that an attack in force was at length to be made.

The enfeebled troopers made what resistance they could, firing rapidly from behind their shelter, often using their clubbed rifles at close quarters.

The scout was in the center of the camp, and every time an Indian managed to scramble over the defenses he darted to the spot, and his rifle or pistols disposed of the antagonist.

But this could not last; the enemy were in too great numbers, and every succeeding loss only served to further infuriate them.

First on one side, then on another, they advanced, shooting, hacking, yelling, and screaming, constantly diminishing the little band by one or two, until at last but a handful remained.

These, rallying round the noble form of the scout, determined to sell their lives bravely.

"Let's die with arms in our hands, boys," he cried, "and let them see that whites don't always run away. Remember, for prisoners there's only the torture-stake and the fire."

The handful of men replied with a stubborn shout, and, excited by the lust of battle, used their weapons with deadly effect.

Their ammunition was expended, and the final struggle was hand to hand; rifle butt against tomahawk would decide the fight.

In the faint light the hideous-painted forms circled around, darting in, then backwards, employing all the wiles of Indian warfare to overpower their foes.

One ugly rush had almost borne the little group from their feet, but it had recovered, and, bulldog-like, renewed the fight, though almost every man was bleeding from a wound more or less severe.

The scout saw the next rush would be the final one, and he nerved himself for this last effort.



A momentary lull occurred as each side prepared for the last grapple.

"Their mounted reserves are coming up to take part in the scalp-lifting," said Buffalo Bill, grimly, for the thud of horses' hoofs could be dimly heard.

The Indians did not advance immediately, as though waiting for the reinforcements to arrive; then on the night air a chorus of yells and cries arose, which were in turn drowned by three crashing volleys of musketry.

Above this again a shout of white men was raised, and to the battle-weary few within the inclosure no sound had ever before sounded so sweet.

"'Tis the troops!" cried Buffalo Bill. "Dare has got through and brought them back to our rescue."

Of this there could be no doubt, for soon the cheers of the troopers, as they smote hard with their swords, were distinctly heard, and the death-yell of many a brave was added to the din.

Buffalo Bill's men had all had their fill of fighting, and throwing an armful or two of fuel upon the smoldering fire, which soon sprang into a blaze, they waited until their comrades had cut their way through the Indians and joined them in the camp.

Dare was one of the first to get through, and he made straight for Buffalo Bill.

Leaping from his horse, he said:

"I'm very late, Cody; but I did my best. And now is my boy safe?"

"Safe and sound, Dare.

"I promised you as long as I lived I would protect him, and I have done so; but another ten minutes and it would have been too late."

Together they made for a spot where Buffalo Bill had erected a small earth defense, banked round with snow, in the center of which, wrapped up in the scout's fur coat the boy lay, shivering with fear, it is true, but still warm and comfortable.

Dare was delighted to find the boy safe, and that weight off his mind, told Buffalo Bill what had happened.

It appeared he had got through quite safely to Fort Abraham Lincoln, and had there found General Custer with a big brigade of soldiers.

Two squadrons of the Seventh Cavalry, under Major Reno, were at once sent out with Dare, and pushing forward day and night, they had managed to come up as already related.

The Indians, unaware of the strength of the party they now had to deal with, after a brief stand made for their shaggy ponies and galloped off, leaving the United States troopers masters of the field.

There were only thirteen of Buffalo Bill's men left on their feet, and of these one or two were badly wounded.

There were several more lying on the ground who had received serious hurts, but of whom hopes of recovery were entertained.

Each trooper of the rescue party had brought with him a well-filled haversack, part of which was still left, and this, together with a tot of rum each, was served out to the half-famished men.

Blazing fires were made, and everything that would conduce to the comfort of the rescued troopers was done; then, secured by their companions from all further fear of attack, those who were able to do so had a good night's

sleep. In the morning the march to Fort Abraham Lincoln was resumed, and, after a tiring journey, safely reached.

A big force of men was here assembling, for the whole of the Bad Lands of the Yellowstone were swarming with war parties from north to south.

The Crows and the Sioux had joined together, and, inducing the neighboring tribes to join them, were sweeping all signs of civilization before them.

Things looked very serious, and it was clear there was going to be a very big struggle. The worst of it was that some weeks must elapse before they would be able to march out on the trail of the hostile Indians, and in that time no one could say what would become of Laura Dare and her unfortunate companions.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A STRANGE FIRE.

Directly the rescued few had got into Fort Abraham Lincoln, a tall, handsome soldier of about forty years of age came to see them, asking particulars of the big defeat.

He shook hands with all the men, and had a few kindly words for each.

Noticing Buffalo Bill, who was leading little Willie Dare by the hand, the soldier cried out:

"Why, Cody, is that you?"

"I had no idea that you were mixed up in this sad affair."

"Yes, General Custer," replied the scout, "I've seen the latter part of it, anyway, and I never want to be mixed up in another such affair, for of all the Indian fighting I've taken part in this has been the most disagreeable."

"I can well believe it, Cody," said General Custer, for that celebrated and ill-fated soldier it was; "and I must say I am not so very much surprised, for there is no doubt we have fearfully underrated the strength of these red devils."

"That is so," said Buffalo Bill; "and we shall have to take care that when we march against them we are not again caught in a trap."

"Leave that to me, Cody."

"Anxious as I am to retrieve our honor, we must make sure that we are going to give them such a licking that they will never recover from, or we shall have them half over the States."

Leonard Dare was well known to General Custer, having served under him when he was only a captain in the Fifth Cavalry, during the war between the North and South.

The general had a long talk with Dare and Buffalo Bill, and was full of sympathy for the trouble which had fallen upon the former, promising to do all that lay in his power to rescue Mrs. Dare and the other prisoners from Sitting Bull's clutches, though until they could move out in sufficient force to insure victory, little, if anything, could be done.

There was no denying this fact, though, to sit inactive during the weeks which must elapse, was more than Leonard Dare could endure.

General Custer was delighted to have the assistance of



Buffalo Bill and his old comrade, and determined to avail himself to the full of their services.

It was essential to try and locate the exact position of the Indians, and to discover whether they were moving southward, and, if possible, what their future intentions were.

For this purpose it was necessary to send out trained scouts, and there was no one who was half so well fitted for this arduous and dangerous task as Buffalo Bill.

Accordingly, a few days after the remnant of General Crook's force had reached Fort Abraham Lincoln, Buffalo Bill and Dare started out on a long reconnoissance.

While they had been at the fort, the weather had made a sudden change for the better; the long winter ended suddenly, and in one night it seemed as if they had got into the middle of spring.

Buffalo Bill, always an ardent admirer of nature, revelled in the newly-budding trees and the waving green of the prairies.

The only drawback was the persistent rain, which kept the scouts constantly wet.

They headed directly north from the fort, making direct for the Bad Lands of the Yellowstone, traveling by day, sweeping the country around with keen glances as they progressed, and carefully choosing their camping places by night.

Leonard Dare was extremely quiet on the journey, and at the end of three days he had hardly spoken at all, answering in monosyllables when the scout talked. Buffalo Bill could see that his trouble was bearing heavily upon him, and in a dozen different ways tried to attract his attention, but with no success.

Indian sign was very scarce, and it was clear that the massed bodies of Indians were keeping well together.

What their plans would be it was impossible to foretell, or in which direction they would make their raid.

On the third night they reached a range of rather steep hills, the sides of which in many places were honeycombed with caves.

It had poured with rain the whole day, and both horses and riders were thoroughly drenched; it had, in fact, been one of the most comfortless days the scouts had passed for a long time.

Toward sunset Buffalo Bill discovered a large cave in the side of one of the hills, and here he determined that they would pass the night.

The cave was large enough to hold men and horses, and the weather being quite mild, they took off their sodden outer garments, from which they wrung the wet, the horses were rubbed down, fuel gathered, and preparations were made to pass a comfortable night.

During the day Buffalo Bill had succeeded in bringing down a young buck, portions of which were soon merrily grilling, which provided the hungry men with a substantial supper.

Leonard Dare was dull and morose as ever, and so after the meal they sat smoking in silence, each staring into the fire, intent upon his own thoughts.

The weather had cleared considerably, and the night was a fine one.

From time to time Buffalo Bill went to the mouth of the cave to look around.

On the last occasion he noticed a faraway glimmer in the distance, looking like a red lantern.

He watched it intently for some time, at last coming to the conclusion that it must be a fire.

A fire in those parts meant men to make it, and men almost certainly meant Indians.

It was of great importance to determine what the light was, and who had made it, so, after calling Dare's attention to the fact, they prepared to go out and investigate the matter.

Seeing carefully to their arms, they started on foot, and a long tramp it proved to be before they got sufficiently near to determine the fact that it was a large fire made of pine logs.

The fire was made in among a clump of trees, and by the smell of the green wood that greeted their nostrils, Buffalo Bill was satisfied that whatever wind there was was blowing from toward the fire to the scouts.

Approaching still nearer, they were enabled to see a number of Indians, though what their business in that particular locality was had yet to be discovered.

"You had best stay here, old man," said Buffalo Bill to Dare, and I will go cautiously forward. I understand their lingo, and if I can get near enough without alarming them, I may be able to discover news of importance to us."

"Just as you like," replied Dare, nonchalantly.

"Don't move from this spot," said the scout, "and be ready to make for the horses if we have to move suddenly. Don't trouble about me; I shall know how to take care of myself."

With these words he dropped upon the ground, and, with a steady movement of the experienced backwoodsman, crawled noiselessly forward.

He soon got near enough to note the numbers and disposition of the party.

They were mostly young braves, and were in all probability in search of fresh meat.

Their hunting seemed to have been fairly successful, for several carcasses lay close to the fire, and, judging by the number of bones strewn about, they had enjoyed a pretty plentiful repast.

As in the case with Indians, when the eye of the white man is not upon them, they were chattering noisily, and behaving with that boisterousness which characterizes young warriors.

By good fortune the scout was able to get near enough to listen to their conversation, and what he heard confirmed his deduction that they had been hunting for buffalo meat, and from the way in which each man boasted of his hunting, it was clear they had been very successful. But the prowess they had displayed in the hunting field did not interest Buffalo Bill, and he was feeling disappointed when one of them mentioned a name with which he was well acquainted.

"Tee-cum-dah was a great warrior," one said, "till he fell under the spell of the palefaces; now his heart has turned to water, and he is no longer a man."

"Wah, Spotted Eagle," said another, "you would not speak thus if Tee-cum-dah were by."

"He carries five scalps, all taken in fair fight."

"He will take no more scalps—at least, paleface scalps, I should say," replied the first speaker.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## BUFFALO BILL PUZZLED.

"He seems to be their champion."

"He took the white squaw's part against Big Horse, but they were always enemies."

"Wah! that is not the reason," joined in a third.

"I know that Tee-cum-dah would take the white squaw to his own wigwam, and Sitting Bull favors him."

"What need trouble," chimed in a fourth.

"Before two more moons we shall have swept our country free of the palefaces, and then white squaws will be as plentiful as berries on the trees in winter."

"Yes," asserted Spotted Eagle, "we have beaten their soldiers, and their 'big knives' availed nothing against our tomahawks."

"When the three nations advance south, we shall sweep the palefaces before us, and they will melt away like snow before the sun."

"Spotted Eagle speaks the words of truth," said an Indian who had not yet spoken, "but we did not take the scalps of all the soldiers who we defeated by the Crazy Woman creek."

"But we should have had them all, for they ran like hares, but they met Pah-e-haska—the name Buffalo Bill was known by among the Indians—and he snatched the prey from our hands."

"Wah! we have enough prisoners, and the Long-Hair himself will not be able to stand against us."

"The warrior who takes his scalp will be a big chief."

"No warrior will take his scalp," said Spotted Eagle.

"Sitting Bull has said that he is to be taken alive."

"He is a brave chief, and when all the palefaces have been destroyed he will be adopted into the Sioux nation."

"He will govern with Sitting Bull."

Buffalo Bill could not help smiling at the extravagant talk of the braves, and of the high honor which they designed for him.

He had learned sufficient of their plans and views to suit his purpose, and as noiselessly as he had advanced he retired to the spot where he had left Dare.

Bidding him silently follow him, they started on their return to the cave.

On the journey he told Dare what he had heard, and bade him keep his spirits up.

"You may rest perfectly assured," he said, "that no harm has befallen your wife or the other prisoners."

"Tee-cum-dah is befriending them, and there is evidently a difference of opinion as to who has the right to claim the prisoners, or at least some of them."

Leonard Dare made no answer, and in silence they returned to the cave, where they found everything safe, the fire still burning, and the horses dry and well rested.

Somewhat disappointed at his old friend's gloomy behavior, Buffalo Bill prepared to get a few hours' rest, and though deeply sympathizing with Dare's trouble, yet regretting that he did not take a more philosophic view of the situation.

With this view he arranged himself with his feet to the fire, and, pipe in mouth, courted that slumber which he rarely sought in vain.

Buffalo Bill, though he lay perfectly quiet, was not inclined to sleep; he felt concerned about Dare, and turned over in his mind his friend's peculiar behavior.

His head was in the shade, and Dare possibly thought he slept.

Buffalo Bill saw that he was certainly ill at ease, and presently he asked him if anything was wrong.

"Hello! I thought you were asleep," said Dare. "No, nothing wrong with me; I don't feel sleepy, that's all."

"You ought to; we've had a heavy day."

To this Dare made no answer, but presently said, abruptly:

"Do you think there is any danger of those Indians finding us here?"

"Not the slightest."

"They will not find our trail till it gets light, and before they could get here we shall be far enough away."

"You're certain there's no risk of our being surprised?"

"Certain; but why do you ask?"

"Oh, nothing particular; only I was thinking that if we were both fast asleep, and they should find us here cooped up in this cave, we shouldn't have much chance of life."

"Don't worry, old man; I always weigh all the chances. We are as safe here as though we were twenty miles away."

Dare lapsed into silence, and presently Buffalo Bill fell asleep.

His slumbers, though, were light and troubled, and in about a couple of hours he awoke.

All was silent, and the fire had smoldered down until it cast only a faint red glow. Buffalo Bill waited for a moment, then threw on a log, which presently burst into a flickering blaze, by the light of which the scout gazed around him.

In the corner the two horses could be seen, but the place where Dare had been sitting when Buffalo Bill went to sleep was vacant. Buffalo Bill called him.

"Dare! Dare!" but got no answer.

He jumped to his feet, threw more wood on the fire, and looked around the cave.

The place contained no other man than the scout. Dare had disappeared.

Further sleep was out of the question; the scout looked from the mouth of the cave.

It was the dark time just before the dawn, and the air blew cold and damp.

There was no sign of his late companion, and no response came to his call.

Buffalo Bill returned to the cave, and sitting down by the fire, thought the matter over.

Dare's behavior had lately been so funny, that there was no knowing what he might have done.

A faint idea of the truth occurred to the scout, but he would have to wait for daylight to verify it.

In the meantime, he picked up the bones of the deer rib from the previous night's repast.

Dare's horse was not gone, and it would seem he could not have intended going far; possibly he had felt uneasy, and had gone out to reconnoiter.



Yet this was hardly necessary, as Buffalo Bill had already found out all that could be found out.

As soon as the first gray streaks began to show in the sky, Buffalo Bill was outside the cave examining the trail, and by the time the gray of the dawn had turned to red he had found the trail.

At first he was not certain of it, as it was possibly the trail he and Dare had made the previous night on their expedition to discover the cause of the fire.

This seemed to be the case, for it led direct to the Indian encampment.

The scout followed the trail back to the cave, and worked all around to find another one, but after an hour spent in fruitless search, was unable to do so.

Again he started off along the first trail, giving it his most minute attention.

Some distance further than he had gone the first time he found that the trail diverged from that made by himself and Dare, and led off by itself.

There could be no longer any doubt that Dare had wandered off toward the Indians by himself the night before, though with what object Buffalo Bill could not tell.

Again Dare's footprints joined the trail he and Dare had made, and this time Dare's footprints were visibly imprinted over his own and Buffalo Bill's previous trail.

On reaching the Indian encampment, Dare seemed to have walked straight up to it, but there was no sign of any struggle having taken place.

He had walked round the ruins of the fires, and had sat down for a time, probably by the remaining embers of one of them; but he had certainly not been captured.

After a time he seemed to have searched around for the trail of the Indian hunting party and to have followed upon it.

All this Buffalo Bill turned over in his mind, and it only served to strengthen his already formed opinion.

For some time he followed the sign left by the Indians and after Dare, and then he saw what his wisest course would be.

He trudged all the way back to the cave.

Here, on looking around, he found that Dare had left both his revolvers and rifle behind him in the corner of the cave. It became clearer and clearer to him.

"Silly fellow!" he muttered, to himself.

"He has gone the worst way to work if he wants to help his people."

The scout then saddled and led out Dare's horse, and mounting his own and leading Dare's, he trotted away toward the camp-fire of the Indians.

The day was then well advanced, and the Indians had a long start.

Buffalo Bill had little difficulty in following the trail, which was a large and well-defined one, the Indian party being numerous.

Occasionally he got down to examine difficult portions, but always he found Dare's tracks over those of the Indians. He followed on until it got almost dark, and he could tell by the freshness of the sign that he was not long behind the chase.

He pushed on as fast as he could, full of hope, for if he could come up with Dare he trusted to be able to save him, even from himself.

For all that, darkness found him still behind.

He dismounted and considered what was best to be done, knowing that some time must elapse before it would be light enough to follow the trail with the aid of the moon.

He walked slowly forward for some time, leading the horses by the bridle, when, on getting to the top of a small hill, he saw in the valley beneath him the camp-fires of the Indians he had been following the whole day.

His heart gave a throb of pleasure, and he immediately retired over the brow of the hill and hobbled the two horses, taking care also to muzzle them.

Then he removed his heavy jacket and big boots, leaving his own and Dare's rifle behind, but taking his revolvers.

Having thus prepared himself, he advanced toward the fires, making a sweep, so as to approach from the side furthest from him.

It was a long way, and he moved quickly, although silently, the darkness favoring him.

He wanted to get close to the camp before the moon was up, so he hurried along.

Soon he was near enough to see the redskins busy in the glare of the fires, preparing the evening meal.

All were moving about, and although Buffalo Bill scanned each one separately, he could see no sign of a white man among them.

What, then, had become of Dare, and why was he hanging alone on the track of the Indians?

Buffalo Bill watched every movement of the Indians, but he saw no sign of his friend, and it was perfectly clear that he was not among them.

Their supper being cooked, they began to devour it; having finished, sat down to enjoy their smoke and boast over past deeds.

The scout, knowing that the moon would soon rise, was now more puzzled than ever, when he noticed a slight movement among the Indians.

Then from out the darkness a tall form stepped, and the Indians saw a white man coolly walk into their midst.

Many sprang to their feet, gripping their weapons and giving the war-whoop; but the white man held out his hands to show he was unarmed, and then made a motion with his out-turned palms from his chest toward them, which is understood on the prairies as a sign of peace.

A babel of voices arose, and Buffalo Bill could see by the fact that the white man's lips were moving that he was saying something to them. By that time a dozen hands had seized him, and he was firmly held, while the chief of the party, partly by signs and partly by speech, interrogated him.

The scout knew that Dare understood very little of the Sioux language, and was afraid that he would not be able to make himself understood.

By the way in which the redskins nodded their heads and gripped their weapons this fact was pretty apparent; but the white man, his arms folded upon his chest, looked calmly around him, appearing constantly to be repeating some set phrase and making negative signs.

At last a big brave raised a glittering tomahawk, and made as though to bury the blade in the white man's brain. Buffalo Bill, though the distance was great, covered this man with his revolver, and was just about to pull the trigger, when the chief who had been questioning



the prisoner interposed, and spoke angrily to one or two of his followers.

The white man was dragged nearer to the fire and thoroughly searched, as though the Indians were looking for concealed weapons.

While this was being done the flickering light from the camp-fires fell upon the man's face, and Buffalo Bill's suspicions were confirmed. This white man who had so calmly walked into the Indian camp and given himself up was Leonard Dare!

The chief gave a sign, and several braves with rawhide thongs fastened Dare's arms behind his back.

He was then forced to sit upon a log, and though no further indignity was offered to him, two Indians, both fully armed, took up their positions one on each side of him, and it was clear he was going to be kept a close prisoner.

There was half a hundred warriors altogether in the camp, and the scout knew that, single-handed, he could not hope to tackle them with success.

Think how he would, he could see no way to extricate his friend from the dangerous position he had voluntarily placed himself in; so, with a last look toward him, he crept away and made the best of his way back to the horses.

Here, while he gazed on the ridge down at the bright glare of the camp-fires, he threshed the whole matter out. For quite a couple of hours he remained thus, and then he suddenly turned away, his mind made up as to what his duty was.

"No," he said, sadly, to himself, "Dare has apparently planned out a course for himself, and he will follow it. I cannot turn him; it would simply be to run risk for nothing to attempt to rescue him.

"Yet I will not abandon him to his fate, though I must think of some other way in which to extricate him from his peril."

Then mounting his own horse, and leading the other, on which he had hoped to be accompanied by Dare, he dashed in the spurs and galloped away in the darkness, making straight for the cave from which he had the morning before started.

## CHAPTER IX.

### OMINOUS PREMONITIONS.

Buffalo Bill's mind was in a state of excitement, and he kept his horse at a gallop, dismounting every now and then to change from his own horse to Dare's, but never pausing in his wild ride until again he had reached the cave from which his friend had disappeared.

He passed the rest of the night there, and slept on until the sun was high in the heavens the next day.

From thence he made his way back to Fort Abraham Lincoln, having little of importance to report.

The mobilization was going along merrily, and there was now sufficient force assembled to tackle the allied tribes of hostile Indians.

A number of Crow Indians, who had refused to join their rebellious comrades, had come into the fort, bringing with them alarming news, confirming the worst reports of the raidings, scalplings, and burnings that had taken place.

One fine morning in early May the troops, with their baggage-wagons and ambulance train, were paraded, and General Custer, mounted on a magnificent thoroughbred horse, rode up and down the lines to inspect the fine men under his command.

Custer was a man close upon six feet high, active and handsome, and intensely popular with the soldiers.

His own regiment, the Seventh U. S. Cavalry, worshiped him as a hero, and would follow him to the death if occasion required.

This regiment was divided into two columns, and intended to act as the advance guard of the party.

With Custer and his staff rode Buffalo Bill and some of the Crow scouts, who were to be the eyes and ears of the expedition.

For the first few days nothing was seen of the enemy, but as they got nearer to the Indian country ominous signs were visible on every hand.

Camping-place after camping-place was found; the grass had been closely cropped by herds of ponies, and the ashes of a hundred camp-fires lay gray on the bare ground.

About a fortnight after they had started the column reached a great camping-place, and Buffalo Bill, riding over the ground, found some of the posts of a huge lodge still standing.

Against one of these posts the scalp of a white man fluttered in the wind.

It was now evident that they were getting close to the enemy, and great caution had to be observed.

On the march no talking was allowed, and at night no fire burned, and nothing was done likely to attract the eye of any Indian who might happen to be roaming about in the vicinity.

Lying, wrapped in their cloaks, on the bare ground, the men of the Seventh Cavalry spoke in whispers, and told dark stories of scalplings and burnings at the stake.

Even the red scouts caught something of the prevailing current of expectation, and begged of their medicine-men charms against the cruelty of the dreaded Sioux.

At last they reached the banks of the Rosebud River, and here General Custer decided to form his base camp.

Buffalo Bill, who had found plenty of Indian signs, went out on the scout, in order, if possible, to discover the numerical strength of the foe, and where they had pitched their lodges.

From the signs, it was evident that vast hordes of redskins were on the warpath, and it was clear to him that the fight, happen when it may, would be a big one.

It was impossible to get very close, for in the wooded country they were now in every clump of trees might conceal an Indian ambush.

On his return he reported to General Custer, and after a consultation, it was decided that the Seventh Cavalry, commanded by Custer in person, should set out on the trail, overtake the Indians, corner them, and bring about a fight.

This was much against Buffalo Bill's advice.

"I'm afraid, general," he said, "you are underrating woefully the strength of the redskins.

"They are flushed with victory, and will fight like demons. They are, moreover, fairly well armed, and in



this case we must not reckon too much on the superiority of white soldiers."

"What, Cody," cried the general, "are you, too, going to turn croaker?"

"I shall move out with seven hundred sabres, and I think we shall be able to cope with more savages than we are likely to meet."

For all that, Buffalo Bill was ill at ease.

His advice was to move with the whole column, to form camps as they went along, and not to advance against the enemy until they were well assured of their numbers.

The scout could not explain to himself the peculiar premonition of evil that possessed him, and so earnest was he in his warnings that Custer seemed to catch something of his doubts.

It was a peculiar thing, too, that that night the general's headquarters flag was blown down, and on being replanted again blew down and fell to the rear.

In the ranks of the Seventh was an old sergeant named Ryland, who had fought in the Civil War.

This man Buffalo Bill knew well, and often chatted with on the line of march.

That night he and Buffalo Bill lay side by side on the ground, and talked for some time before they went to sleep.

"I've got a kinder feelin', Cody," said the sergeant, who was a grizzled veteran of the old type, "that I'm marchin' ter my last fight. Some o' the boys are mad ter get at the reds, as they calls 'em, but I kin tell yer it's goin' ter be a blamed big fight."

And Buffalo Bill was entirely of the old sergeant's opinion.

Next morning the march up the Rosebud was begun, and all day signs of the Indians, who kept retreating before them, were met with.

That night the column was divided into two, Major Reno commanding one, and Custer the other.

A forced march was made before dawn, so that the dust the column made should not betray their whereabouts.

In the morning, although they were unable to locate the actual camping ground of the Indians, great herds of ponies were seen, and on the other side of a ridge of hills that lay immediately in front of them columns of smoke were seen to be curling up, and the barking of innumerable dogs denoted the presence of the villages of a vast number of Indians.

It had been Custer's intention to remain quietly where he was with his command until night fell, when he would advance his forces, and in the gray of the morning sweep down upon the Sioux. But this plan miscarried.

Buffalo Bill, who had been out some miles in advance of the regiment, came suddenly upon three Indians.

Without a moment's hesitation he unslung his rifle, and brought one to the ground with a bullet through his body, but the other two wheeled around their shaggy ponies and galloped off at full speed.

Pursuing them at a gallop, Buffalo Bill fired several more shots, bringing down one more, but the third man escaped, and disappeared over the ridge of the hills.

Buffalo Bill immediately returned to Custer and reported what had happened.

"The redskins are now aware of our presence without doubt," he said, "and all idea of a surprise is over."

"Then I will attack at once," said the general, and the trumpeters sounding, the whole command fell in, and marching some distance down the valley, separated, intending to strike the villages at different points.

Custer himself, with three hundred men, determined to strike the first blow, and with him Buffalo Bill marched.

Major Reno, with four hundred men, was to move forward at as rapid a pace as he thought prudent, and charge the village afterward.

These arrangements being made, Custer's party trotted gayly forward.

They went on, and reached the top of the hill, when the sight which met their gaze was one, indeed, to appal the stoutest heart.

Instead of a village of some eight hundred or a thousand warriors, which they had expected to find, a veritable city of wigwams lay before them.

The smoke from the fires clouded the sky; great herds of ponies extended as far as the eye could see; thousands of painted Sioux, armed and astride their mustangs, galloped around in circles, working themselves into a frenzy of fury to fight the white man.

Medicine-men danced and yelled their incantations, and the squaws were seen busily striking their tents and hurrying away with the swarms of dusky children out of harm's way.

It was clear a mistake had been made, but it was now too late to rectify it.

Even as they paused the crack of rifles on their right told them that the Indians had already attacked Reno, and thus retreat was out of the question.

There was nothing for it but to go forward.

Pausing for a moment, Custer took off his hat, and turning to the troopers, he said:

"Men, a big fight lies before us, but my luck will not desert me. You who have followed me know that I have never lost a gun, never lost a color, and never been defeated. Close the ranks, and, holster to holster, charge!"

A wild shout that must have struck terror into many a red man's heart rang out upon the warm summer air: three hundred sabers flashed in the sunlight, and, with set teeth and determined hearts, the devoted troopers plunged down into the shrieking, shouting, seething mass of painted and befeathered red men.

The Indians could not stand against the shock of their heavier and better-mounted enemy, and the band of soldiers penetrated farther and farther into the seething mass, shooting and hewing its way, and leaving a bloody track behind it.

But the redskins hung on to them like wolves upon a stag, and those that were wounded and hurled from their ponies slashed and cut at the horse's legs, and woe betide the unfortunate trooper who once reached the ground.

General Custer and Buffalo Bill rode at the head of their men, each performing prodigies of valor, and striving with heroic purpose to cut a way through the yelling hordes.

The party was entirely surrounded, and as fast as one enemy was beaten to the ground, a dozen seemed to leap into his place.

The din of the battle was deafening, and above all the horrid war-whoop, half-yell and half-scream, rang upon the air.



Once or twice it seemed as if all was lost, but the troopers with mighty arms carved their way farther and farther, until at last with a burst they were through the mass, and emerged, weary and panting, the other side.

Not all, though; only a part of that gallant band had succeeded in getting thus far, more than half lay on the ground among the whirling ponies of the hordes of redskins.

"My God!" cried Custer.

"It has been a mistake! We shall never get back!"

"Cannot Reno come to our assistance?" asked Buffalo Bill.

"We can hold our own here, and the redskins will not stand any more such charges."

"He is himself engaged," answered the general.

"That is so," said Buffalo Bill; "but see, he has crossed the Little Big Horn and dismounted his men. The enemy have left him entirely free. There is no reason why he should not come to our assistance."

In the breathing space that was allowed them, a signal was made to Reno:

"Overmatched. Come on at once! Bring up reserves from camp."

Half a dozen men, too, were dispatched to try and skirt the Indians and get back to Reno with a message; but they were all pursued, overtaken, and killed.

The enemy, their blood now being aroused by the losses which had been inflicted upon them, surrounded the survivors, circling madly around and around them on their shaggy ponies, and firing into their midst.

"This will never do," said Buffalo Bill. "We had best charge through them, and try and cut our way back to Reno."

"It is our only chance," said Custer. "Boys," to the men, "we have this time met our match. To stay here is certain death. We must cut our way through."

The men, game to the last, cheered him to the echo, and at full gallop they charged again upon their blood-thirsty foes.

It was but a repetition of the previous shock, only this time the white men were fewer, and the Indians seemed more numerous.

Time after time they essayed to carve their way through; but the hordes of painted demons beat them back, and every time their numbers got less, until but a handful remained alive.

"Why on earth does not Reno come?" cried Custer to Buffalo Bill, who stuck persistently by the general.

"He either did not understand our message, or has his own hands full," was the scout's reply; and this was all they could manage to say, for a fresh body bore down upon them, and the tide of battle forced them apart.

They were now so far reduced in numbers that they were pressed this way and that, and the shrieks of the victorious Indians showed that it was only a question of a short time before not a man would be left alive.

Strangely enough, the young officer who bore the flag was still unhurt, and he, with Custer, Buffalo Bill, and some twenty more, found themselves on a little hillock, the sole survivors of the ill-fated band.

Many of them were unhorsed, and these, from behind the shelter of their companions' horses, kept up a fire

upon their enemies. Presently the standard-bearer fell, pierced to the heart.

Another man snatched up the colors, only in turn to fall with a tomahawk in his brain.

Sergeant Ryland took up the flag and shouted out in cheery tones to his companions:

"Rally around the old flag, boys!"

And so the band of heroes, now reduced to eleven in number, and all on foot, closed in back to back, while the merciless crowds of redskins pressed on in overwhelming numbers.

It was a grand sight to see those few white men calmly facing death, selling their lives dearly to the savage foe, each man ready to lay down his life to save his friends.

One by one they fell, until only General Custer, Buffalo Bill, and the old sergeant were left.

A hideous little savage forced his pony forward and fired his rifle full into Buffalo Bill's face, but although his hair was singed by the flash, the bullet missed its mark, for Custer, who was bleeding from a wound in the head, and whose left arm was nearly severed from his body, had plunged his sword into the neck of the savage just in the nick of time.

Another Indian aimed a blow with a tomahawk at the general, but the sergeant, who still gripped the flag-pole, brought him down with a shot from his revolver.

Several Indians on foot rushed in at Buffalo Bill, but he kept them off with his sword, until at last the blade, striking the haft of an ax, shivered to atoms.

Custer came to the scout's assistance, and just as three or four of the red demons pressed forward to give Buffalo Bill his finishing blow, the general stepped in front of him, only to be immediately transfixed with the lance of the foremost Indian.

It was the redskin's last blow, though, for Sergeant Ryland blew out his brains with the only cartridge in his pistol, and hurled the now useless weapon in another one's face.

Buffalo Bill, with the broken sword-blade in his hand, endeavored to stand over the general's body, but a swarm of mounted men hurled themselves upon the last survivors of the terrible massacre.

A great weight seemed to fall upon the head of Buffalo Bill, and with the fiendish yells of the red men ringing in his ears, he seemed to fall through black space, until with a crash he remained stationary, and consciousness left him.

## CHAPTER X.

### NIGHT ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

When Buffalo Bill again opened his eyes on his surroundings it was night. The moon shone down coldly and brightly on the battlefield, toning down the ghastly sights and shading the red shambles that the daylight would expose.

The scout tried to move, but found he could do so only with difficulty.

A red man lay across him, and he was entangled with his dead horse.

The effort caused him considerable pain, and he fell back, uttering a faint groan.

There were wild sounds ringing around the triumphant



yell of the savages celebrating their victory in the camp not far from the battlefield, and the discordant cries of squaws as among the heaps of slain they discovered the forms of husbands or sons.

Moving about in the field were numbers of Indians—the squaws, as before-mentioned, searching for missing relations, while parties of warriors stripped the dead of their belongings, and, as is their savage custom, tore the scalps from the corpses.

Cool and brave as he was, Buffalo Bill could not help shuddering as he contemplated the ghastly work, and lay thinking how soon his turn would come.

Every now and then a sharp cry of pain told that the savages had found some unfortunate in whom life still lingered.

A stab with a scalping-knife or blow with a tomahawk soon settled the business, and the braves moved on to other groups.

The Indians were in small parties, roving about all over the field, and presently a lot of about six approached the scout.

A man who lay beside him was stripped and scalped, and as the body fell back again upon the ground, and the moonbeams shone upon the face, Buffalo Bill recognized the old veteran, Sergeant Ryland.

"His presentiment was pretty right," he muttered, and then a warrior stopped and seized the belt in which Buffalo Bill carried his revolvers.

He tugged roughly at it, and caused Buffalo Bill much pain, so that he groaned again.

The Indian gave a savage cry, and one or two of his companions, with knives and tomahawks ready, crowded around to deal the wounded man his death-blow.

One man seized the scout's hair and dragged his head up from the ground, while another raised his tomahawk to crash the blade into his brain. It seemed that the scout's luck had at last deserted him, and that now his time had really come.

He kept his eyes fixed in a sort of fascination upon the gleaming steel, but before it could fall, a harsh voice cried out in Sioux:

"Stay your hand, Wa-non-gnwe."

The brave paused, and the speaker stepped forward.

Buffalo Bill, looking up, saw it was Tee-cum-dah.

It was clear he had authority over his countrymen, for although they grumbled at the interference, none attempted any violence against the scout.

"Wa-non-gnwe found the paleface lived. The scalp belongs to him!" grumbled the Indian.

"Peace! It is the White Buffalo! Sitting Bull has said he shall not die. Go, Wa-non-gnwe, and tell the chief. Fetch him hither."

The Indian departed, and some of the others went off on their errands of murder and robbery, but Tee-cum-dah and another warrior stayed by the scout.

"It is you, Tee-cum-dah?" said Buffalo Bill.

"I owe you my life, I think."

"Wagh! the White Buffalo held the life of Tee-cum-dah in his hand, and he did not take.

"The red man always pays back."

"How is it with the prisoners, Tee-cum-dah? Are they all well?"

"Some are dead."

Buffalo Bill's heart gave a thud.

"The white man who was with me when we first met you, and who now is in your hands—is he dead?"

"No, he lives; but few of the other men are alive."

"And his squaw—the mother of Saraquat?"

"She lives."

The scout felt considerably relieved, but being terribly weak, could ask no further questions.

So he lay wondering why Reno had not come up to Custer's assistance; whether the gallant general was dead; why the rest of the troops had not come up and joined in the battle, and if unable to rescue the unfortunate cavalry, at least have avenged them.

But he was no more able to explain this point than the hundreds of others since have been able to, and while he was still wondering several Indians returned; the dead man was lifted off his chest, and he was disengaged from his horse.

Not ungently they raised him and bore him away, leaving the field with all its horrors behind, and passing through the Indian camp.

The scene of mad revelry which the scout saw there told him that the red man's success had been perfect—beyond their wildest hopes it must have been, and he had little hope for himself or any of those other unfortunate prisoners who were in the Indians' power.

No insult was offered to him as he was borne along through, which was possibly due to the fact that Tee-cum-dah stalked solemnly at the head of the procession. They reached a lodge almost in the center of the camp, and here Buffalo Bill was laid upon a pile of skins.

His hurts were examined by Tee-cum-dah, and it was found he had a very nasty gash in the head, inflicted by a tomahawk, and that he had been pierced in the shoulder by an arrow.

These wounds were washed and bound up, and then the Indian administered a drink of native decoction, which, although bitter to the taste, had the effect of putting the scout into a deep sleep.

It was late the next day before he awoke, and then he was given some broth, his wounds again dressed, his wants attended to, and again he sank to sleep.

After that some little fever must have set in, for Buffalo Bill remembered nothing of what had taken place for the next day or two, though afterward he was dimly conscious of having seen several people passing in and out of the lodge.

At last he opened his eyes to find Tee-cum-dah standing looking down upon him, while a female form sat on a little stool beside him.

He stared hard, then muttered:

"Am I dreaming?"

"No, you are not dreaming any more," said a sweet voice; and the scout knew that Leonard Dare's handsome wife sat beside him.

"Thank goodness you at least are safe!" he said, holding out his hand. "But how is it we are here? Have we been rescued?"

"No, we are both in the power of these dreadful people. But you were very ill, and they were afraid you would die, so they sent me to nurse you, as Sitting Bull is anxious for you to live."

"And my old friend Leonard?"



The tears gathered in Mrs. Dare's eyes.

"Poor Leonard! He is a prisoner also, but I am never allowed to see him."

All this was very strange to Buffalo Bill, and he wondered much at the turn affairs had taken, but he still felt too weak to talk much, so he soon fell asleep.

But the crisis had now passed, and the scout, who had been very severely wounded, began rapidly to mend.

During his convalescence he had many a talk with Laura Dare, who continued to nurse him.

He learned all that had happened at her house as he concluded; the servants had made what defence they could, but had been overpowered, and either killed or taken prisoners.

She and her daughter Emily had been seized and carried off, and her son Will had been captured by Tee-cum-dah.

She was most delighted to hear that the little fellow was safe at Fort Abraham Lincoln. Her own condition was rather peculiar.

It appeared that the chief, Big Horse, claimed having captured her, and insisted that she should go to his wigwam as his first squaw; but Sitting Bull—who, although not the war chief, yet was certainly the political head of the great Sioux nation—would not agree to this.

The matter was to have been settled at a big palaver of the chiefs, but that palaver had never taken place.

The success over General Crook's men, and the idea of driving all the whites out of the country, had turned the minds of the Indians from all minor matters, and the question was still unsettled.

Pending the decision, Mrs. Dare was under Sitting Bull's protection.

While the scout was rapidly gaining strength, he thought these matters over, and to a certain extent saw the drift of the wily old Sioux chief's ideas.

Everything would depend upon how he should play his cards when the time came and he threshed the pros and cons out in his mind.

Mrs. Dare was no longer allowed to come to him, being confined, as before, in the wigwam of Sitting Bull's squaws, where she had not much to complain of.

Her daughter Emily, a beautiful girl, was with her, and many a young chief cast longing glances toward the "pale maiden."

Sentries were always kept at the front and rear of the wigwam in which the scout was lodged, but no bonds confined him, and he was free to wander about the hut, but not to leave it.

One morning several warriors approached, and behind them the squat figure of Sitting Bull was seen.

The old chief and Buffalo Bill knew one another well, and the latter had once performed a service for the chief.

Sitting Bull advanced alone into the hut, in which he sat down without saying a word, the scout, from his pile of skins, watching him, but not speaking. Solemnly the chief lit his calumet and smoked, after a while passing it to Buffalo Bill, who also smoked and waited in silence.

At last the chief opened the conversation.

"There is peace in the heart of Sitting Bull toward his brother, White Buffalo."

"White Buffalo is glad."

"Sitting Bull's white brother has been very near the

happy hunting-grounds of his fathers. His red brothers have nursed him gently."

"White Buffalo is grateful to his red brothers. He will not forget."

"Many white men have gone to the happy hunting-grounds."

"Many red men went with them."

"Wagh! it was a big fight. The dead bodies lay on the ground like leaves in autumn, but there were many scalps in the wigwams of the Sioux. No white man escaped."

"A day of retribution is at hand, Sitting Bull."

The old chief gave a smile of inexpressible cunning.

"Sitting Bull thinks not," he said. "He is the chief of a very mighty nation. The Crows and the Cherokees have joined him; other nations only wait to be asked; the red men have banded together, and the white man must go. We have twice met the soldiers, and twice we have beaten them; once they fled, and once we killed them all; the others would not fight."

"Did not the other soldiers come to the assistance of the party with me who attacked you down from the hills?"

"No, they fought from the woods, and at night made a camp. Next day we attacked them and killed them all."

This was not true, but Buffalo Bill did not know that till some weeks later. Reno did make a camp, and was attacked, suffering some loss, but he managed to retire with best part of his men, and carried the news of the massacre back to Fort Abraham Lincoln.

But at the time the news seemed bad enough, and Buffalo Bill was impressed with the vast success the redskins had achieved.

He waited for Sitting Bull to continue.

"My white brother can see that his countrymen are driven out of the Indian lands forever. Now the red men have combined they can defy their foes."

"Sitting Bull knows that is not so. He knows that the white men will avenge the death of those who have fallen."

"The combined nations will eat them up as they did the valiant Custer."

"Bah! White Buffalo knows the nations will quarrel. When did the Sioux and Cherokees sit down to the same fire for long, and where are the Pawnees, and the Blackfeet, and the Comanches? They will all help against their old enemy, the Sioux."

"My white brother makes mistakes. The red men will not join with the white men against their own color."

"They have done so before."

"And if they did what would be the result?"

"You would be simply wiped out."

"It will not be so," said the chief; "but Sitting Bull will humor his white brother, and will suppose that the Sioux would be defeated. What would they do with Sitting Bull?"

"Such a renowned chief would, of course, die, tomahawk in hand, at the head of his nation," said Buffalo Bill.

"Sitting Bull would know how to die," said the chief, stiffly; "but he might be taken prisoner."

"Then he would be shot off-hand," said the scout, bluntly.

The chief smoked for some minutes in silence, then Buffalo Bill said to him:



"What is Sitting Bull going to do with his white brother?"

"Why does the Buffalo ask? Has he any complaint? Has he not food, has he not rugs, a lodge, slaves to wait on him?"

"White Buffalo is not complaining, but he knows there is some reason why he is not led to the torture post."

"Sitting Bull has a memory. He remembers the Buffalo once befriended him, and he wants to repay him."

"How?"

Again there was a silence, then the chief said:

"Sitting Bull is head of a mighty nation, but he has many enemies who envy him his power. There is no red man whom he can trust, and he wants some one to help him govern. The white men are wise; they see farther than their red brothers, and they know many things."

"Who is there among the white men better than Sitting Bull's friend, White Buffalo? He shall live with Sitting Bull and help him govern. I have spoken."

The scout whistled. After all, there had been a deal of truth in what he had overheard the Indians talking about when he had discovered the hunting party. He thought a moment, then he said:

"You offer me to join with you in governing the Sioux?"

"To be Sitting Bull's friend."

"And if I refuse?"

The chief shrugged his shoulders.

"Big Horse is a mighty war-chief; he wants your scalp."

"Let him take it."

"Consider what I have said."

"I cannot be false to my own color."

"Listen further; Sitting Bull will tell you a tale."

"Two moons ago his warriors captured a white squaw and her pappoose, a beautiful girl; there were other prisoners, too, but those do not matter. Big Horse wanted the white squaw and her daughter, but Sitting Bull prevented him."

"He wanted to see how the big fight would go; if it had gone against the Sioux the whites would have been useful as hostages."

"Downy old scoundrel," thought Buffalo Bill.

"Then a strange thing happened; a hunting-party of my braves brought in the white squaw's husband, and it is said that he is mad, but Sitting Bull knows he is not. Big Horse would take his scalp, too."

"Big Horse is an ambitious man."

"He is very powerful, and if White Buffalo does not agree with Sitting Bull's ideas, the white squaw and her daughter will go to Big Horse's wigwam and the prisoners—all the prisoners, will die at the torture stake," and the chief grinned pleasantly.

Sitting Bull would not allow that; he knows the whites will come and avenge these deeds."

"If the Buffalo will not help him what can he do? Of course if anything should happen afterward, and the Buffalo is Sitting Bull's friend, he would not forget that his life was given him by his red brother."

In a flash the scout saw the chief's meaning.

"My white brother will consider over Sitting Bull's words," and the chief strode from the hut.

## CHAPTER XI.

### BIG HORSE GETS MUTINOUS.

There was much to be considered in the words of Sitting Bull.

It was clear the redskin was playing for safety.

He had seen enough of the whites to know their strength, and to feel sure that a terrible vengeance would be exacted; he also knew full well the fickleness of his own countrymen, and knew that it was only a question of time before the Crows and Cherokees would desert him.

Hence he must enjoy his power while he had it, and by making Buffalo Bill his friend, insure his safety in case the whites should defeat him, when he relied upon Buffalo Bill to use his influence to save his life.

It was a clever scheme and worthy of Sitting Bull's well-known foresight.

On the other hand, Buffalo Bill certainly owed him his life, and he would be doing no harm by agreeing to Sitting Bull's suggestion.

If he did not fall in with them he knew the fate of the Dares was sealed.

He sent word to Sitting Bull that he required two days to consider the matter, and he asked to be allowed to talk over the position with his friends.

Sitting Bull himself came to him next morning, and, making signs of peace himself, conducted Buffalo Bill from the tent and led him around the huge camp. The scout had seen many encampments in his life, but never such a huge assemblage as now appeared before him. There were simply thousands of warriors, while squaws and children seemed innumerable, the barking of dogs and cries of the papposes resounded on all sides, while hordes of ponies were to be seen out on the plains.

Buffalo Bill gazed sadly at the hill from which the three hundred sabers of the Seventh Cavalry, with their ill-fated leader, had charged down upon the foe, to die, but to win for themselves an everlasting place on the world's roll of heroes.

He was not allowed to visit the field where the bodies still lay, but could picture to himself the scene.

That night he went to Sitting Bull's lodge, a fine large one, and here, to his joy, he found Mrs. Dare and Emily.

He chatted with them for some time until suddenly the flap of the tent was raised, and Leonard Dare conducted inside, guarded by two warriors.

He looked pale, his beard was long and his hair unkempt, but he was still a handsome man.

The meeting between him and his wife was touching.

"Laura!" he cried, and, with one bound, leaped to her side and folded her in his arms.

The Indians would have torn him away, but Buffalo Bill said, "Let them be," and Sitting Bull nodded assent.

For one minute they poured out their hearts to each other, while their daughter, Emily, clung to each in turn.

Sitting Bull at length spoke, and Dare was seized by the Indians; they only secured his legs, though, and then, at a sign, withdrew. There were now only present the chief, his first squaw, and his son, a bright lad about fifteen; Buffalo Bill, and the Dares.

The whole state of affairs was discussed, and in the



end Buffalo Bill agreed, for the sake of his friends, more than for his own, to fall in with the views of Sitting Bull.

After the prisoners had been removed the chief had a talk with Buffalo Bill, in which he very plainly gave out his views and told him he expected, in case of anything going wrong, that Buffalo Bill would make his case all right with the government at Washington.

This Buffalo Bill promised to do as far as lay in his power.

The next day Sitting Bull convened a big palaver, in which he told his followers that the White Buffalo had in previous days befriended him, and that now he was determined to show the gratitude of a red man toward him.

That Buffalo was a mighty warrior, and now that the white men had been defeated, once and for all, the white chief had determined to throw in his lot with his red brethren, and Sitting Bull was going to adopt him into the tribe.

There was great diversity of opinion about this, and Big Horse, a fierce, truculent chief, made a fiery speech against it.

It was a remarkable thing that, although Sitting Bull was no good in the field—in fact, he always kept far enough out of harm's way—he was able to sway the opinions of his followers in the camp, and for fiery and persuasive oratory he had no equal.

Therefore, in the speech which he made in answer to Big Horse he carried the opinion of the redskins with him, and he pointed out in such glowing terms the advantages that were going to accrue from their having associated with them such a mighty warrior as Buffalo Bill, that the Indians were ready to welcome him.

A big feast was held that night, and it was proposed to put a couple of the white prisoners to death to celebrate the occasion.

Buffalo Bill had great difficulty in persuading Sitting Bull to put a stop to the nefarious plan.

After that Buffalo Bill was allowed to roam about within the precincts of the camp at his own pleasure, and he noticed that there were plenty who regarded him with very black looks.

Big Horse was evidently brewing mischief, for he kept aloof from Sitting Bull, and a number of the younger braves followed his lead.

That night, too, the whole of the Cherokees deserted, and there seemed to be a general feeling of uneasiness among the Indians.

The completeness of their victory and the very absence of all signs of pursuit seemed to frighten them, and small parties began to pack off and start toward the upper regions of the Yellowstone by themselves.

Sitting Bull thought it would be as well to retreat also, and away they went from the scene of the massacre, marching for several days, Buffalo Bill taking care that the prisoners were cared for on the march.

At last they pitched camp upon some old hunting-grounds; but by then it was found that their party was still further reduced in numbers.

Big Horse, who all the way had been holding meetings among his followers, then came and demanded that the white squaws, Mrs. Dare and Emily, should be given up to him.

Sitting Bull asked Buffalo Bill what should be done.

"They must not be given up on any account," said the scout, "or I will sever my connection with the tribe at once."

"What can I do?"

"Leave me to settle with Big Horse. Call a palaver and we will argue it with him."

Sitting Bull agreed, and Tee-cum-dah was taken into Buffalo Bill's confidence.

At the palaver Big Horse advanced his claim, as having been in command of the party that captured the Dares.

Tee-cum-dah opposed his claim as having been the actual warrior who laid hands upon the prisoners, and there the dispute stood until Buffalo Bill stood up, and, speaking the Sioux language fluently, made the following speech:

"My brothers, most of you know me; I am the White Buffalo—I am a hunter and a warrior. Sitting Bull has taken the White Buffalo by the hand; they are brothers.

"The White Buffalo has come to live among you—to be your chief and assist at your councils. But he must have a squaw, and he will take one of his own color.

"My brothers, the white squaw and her daughter shall go to the wigwam of the White Buffalo. Sitting Bull has said that it shall be so, and I will fight any man who denies my right. I have spoken."

At buzz of surprise at the very audacity of this speech ran around the ring of Indians, and many voices rose; but Sitting Bull quelled them.

Then Big Horse sprang up and, in a fiery speech, challenged Buffalo Bill to fight for the prize.

The scout accepted, and would have ventured the combat on the spot; but Tee-cum-dah spoke up.

"The White Buffalo is not yet fit," he said.

"Tee-cum-dah will fight for him."

Many of the warriors cried out that Tee-cum-dah had a right to the squaw, and might fight.

"I give up my right to the White Buffalo," said Tee-cum-dah.

Big Horse would not fight the brave, however, and Sitting Bull again arranged matters.

"The combat shall take place this day week," he said, and the palaver broke up angrily.

After that there was very bad feeling between the two parties of Sioux—Sitting Bull's followers and Big Horse's—and it was as much as the former could do to prevent the parties coming to blows.

Day after day there were desertions, and the party went further toward the upper reaches of the Yellowstone.

Ugly rumors were about, too, that a large number of soldiers were following on the trail, and that already several parties of Indians had been met with and pretty well exterminated.

The feeling against the whites got worse and worse, and one morning three of the white prisoners, two men and a woman, were found murdered and scalped, and this seemed to be the spark that set fire to the smoldering wrath.

The two parties became quite estranged, and Buffalo Bill took Mrs. Dare and Emily into his wigwam, and Leonard Dare being smuggled in and being supplied with arms by Buffalo Bill on the quiet, guarded his treasures with a jealous eye.

Nothing further was said about the combat, though



Buffalo Bill was keeping himself prepared; and so the days passed till the night before the trial was to be made.

On this particular night Buffalo Bill and Dare were enabled to have their first quiet talk since the scout had thrown in his lot for the time being with Sitting Bull.

"Why on earth did you give yourself up?" Buffalo Bill asked.

"I could not help it, Cody; if I had not, I should simply have gone raving mad.

"I could not endure waiting all those weeks till the troops were ready to start, and I felt that I didn't care what happened so long as I was with my wife and Emily.

"There was just the chance that I might be able to help them—at any rate, I was close to them, though a prisoner, and I have been happier since I have been captured than I was while wondering what happened to them."

"It was a risky thing to do, and your life would certainly have paid the forfeit had not the very audacity of the thing puzzled the redskins.

"They thought you must be mad, and as they never harm mad persons, they spared you."

"I was awfully sorry to have to leave you as I did, but I knew you would never agree, and you assured me there was no danger of the Indians surprising you as you slept, so I sneaked off.

"I missed them at their camp, though, and had to follow their trail all the next day, which was to me a difficult job."

"I know all your movements," said the scout. "I followed on your trail, and saw you give yourself up; I was almost in time to prevent you."

He related all that had happened.

The faces of the captives grew grave when they heard about the crushing defeat of Custer.

"What will happen to us, and how will it all end?" asked Mrs. Dare, who sat by her husband's side.

"We must escape the first opportunity, that's certain," said the scout, emphatically.

"It will not be difficult, I think, with the facilities I have, and the end will be that the Sioux nation will be scattered over the face of the continent, and will never be allowed to win another victory like that of the Little Big Horn."

At the word "escape" the faces brightened up, and means and ways were being discussed when, silently, the flap of the tent was raised, and a warrior, fully armed, was seen in the entrance.

Buffalo Bill snatched up his rifle, but the warrior spoke.

"Why does my white brother take his gun? Tee-cum-dah should be welcome in his wigwam."

## CHAPTER XII.

### A NIGHT SCUFFLE.

Room was at once made for the Indian, who, with less ceremony than usual, began to speak. He had been out on the scout, and had made important discoveries.

A large number of white soldiers with "long knives"—swords—and "fire death-carts"—field guns—was following hotly on their trail, and would soon be up with them.

This news was indeed important, and Buffalo Bill talked the matter over with Dare.

"We must escape without delay," he said.

"It will never do to be here if the soldiers do attack. In case of a defeat the exasperated Indians would sacrifice us for a certainty."

Tee-cum-dah was taken into confidence, and it was arranged that ponies should be brought down to the outside of the camp nearest to Buffalo Bill's lodge, and that then all the prisoners, in Indian disguise, should steal off toward the pursuing soldiers.

If they got a good start, they would be able to defy pursuit until they reached the soldiers, and might perhaps be the means of bringing some of the tribe to justice.

Buffalo Bill meant to send word by Tee-cum-dah to Sitting Bull, telling him that directly the soldiers appeared he and his tribe must throw down their arms, and that he would do what he could to get them pardoned; in no case must he show fight.

All were so busy in the lodge, arranging blankets around their shoulders, staining their faces with ochre, and in other ways making their disguise, that the footsteps of three men who sneaked up outside the tent were unheard.

One of these, after listening intently, began very quietly to slit with his knife the buffalo skin of which the lodge was made.

Soon he had got a hole big enough to glide through, and he was followed by another man.

The first intimation Buffalo Bill had of the fact was a dark form springing suddenly upon him and striking with all his might at his chest.

From the stooping position of the man who aimed the blow, it struck the scout right on the big steel clasp of his belt, and with such force as to send him staggering backward.

The clasp, though, had saved his life, for the knife which had struck the blow was shattered, and ere the would-be assassin could strike another blow, Buffalo Bill had grappled with him.

As he did so the second man sprang to his feet and attacked Dare, who, totally unarmed, had a difficult task.

Tee-cum-dah, who had been to see to the horses, had fortunately returned, and he came to Dare's assistance.

Meanwhile, Buffalo Bill and his foe, locked in a deadly embrace, were rolling about the floor of the lodge, each trying to disarm his antagonist, but neither being able to do so.

The females screamed with fright at the terrible occurrence, and the wildest confusion reigned for a minute or two.

Then Buffalo Bill was enabled to get a grip on his enemy's throat, and he gave it such a squeeze that the man's tongue protruded, and his grasp relaxed.

As he fell back there was a sickening thud, and Tee-cum-dah buried his tomahawk in his countryman's skull.

Buffalo Bill, thus released, whipped out his revolver, and springing to Dare's aid, sent a bullet into his adversary's head.

Tee-cum-dah was at that moment coolly proceeding to scalp the Indian he had killed, and as he placed the scalp in his belt, he said, nonchalantly:

"Big Horse."

"Ah! I thought this was some of his work," panted the scout.



"He did not want to meet me in fair fight, so he tried to murder me and carry off the prisoners."

Dare satisfied himself that his wife and daughter were unhurt.

"We must get off at once," said Buffalo Bill.

"The alarm will have been given."

They hurried from the lodge, Tee-cum-dah, giving a low whistle as of warning, following them.

They had not got very far, when they saw a dozen or so forms hurrying toward them.

The third Indian who had been with Big Horse had hurried off, alarmed his companions, and was returning to avenge his chief.

Buffalo Bill and Dare stepped in front to defend the females; but they would have stood little chance had not Tee-cum-dah with half a score of warriors, for whom his whistle was intended, suddenly opposed the other warriors.

With angry cries the two parties met, and for a few minutes a sharp conflict was waged.

Buffalo Bill seized the opportunity of making for the horses, knowing where Tee-cum-dah had brought them.

But when they got there, to their disappointment, the horses were no longer there; they had been removed.

The scout did not intend being defeated at the last moment and, leaving Dare to guard the females, he started back to get Tee-cum-dah's assistance.

He found that the brave had driven off his foes; on learning that the horses had been taken, he expressed his astonishment.

They quickly made for the spot where the bulk of the horses were tethered, and were securing fresh mounts, when a large party of Indians came rushing upon them.

By that time more of Tee-cum-dah's followers had come up, and at the chief's orders fell upon their own tribesmen.

There were no saddles to be obtained, and fresh numbers of Indians kept pouring in, and the conflict waxed hotter and hotter, the shouts of the combatants being deafening.

In the midst of it Sitting Bull came up and soon saw what was going on.

He accused Buffalo Bill of treachery, but the scout told him bluntly that he was not bound to him in any way, and that the game was up.

"The soldiers will be down on you very shortly, and it is no time for dallying. Call off your men, and don't let them oppose the soldiers."

Sitting Bull was inclined to carry matters with a high hand, but it was no time for wasting moments.

The scout had managed to get his friends mounted, and vaulted on to a horse himself.

The struggle, which had surged away from them, was rapidly returning, and there was no time to lose.

Sitting Bull saw that it was useless for him to attempt to quell the riot that had arisen, so, to the scout's surprise, he leaped on a horse and announced his intention of escaping with Buffalo Bill.

Without any further delay they galloped off, but it was soon discovered that they were pursued, and they settled down to a long and rough ride.

Buffalo Bill kept in the rear with Sitting Bull, and every now and then the former would send a shot toward

the pursuers, which appeared to keep them in check, and presently the pursuit ceased altogether.

They did not slacken speed, however, and for some hours pursued their way, until at length they were brought up sharp with a challenge from a United States cavalryman.

Dare was able to shout out that they were friends before the soldier fired, and soon they were safe within their own countrymen's lines.

The feelings of the prisoners on finding themselves once more free can be better imagined than described.

Dawn was just breaking as the party were led to the place where the commanding officer lay sleeping, Sitting Bull's form being regarded with much attention by the troopers.

Major Reno, the commander of the party, was well known to Buffalo Bill, and he stared at the scout and rubbed his eyes, stared again, then exclaimed:

"Great snakes! can it be Cody? Why, man I thought you were lying dead down on the Little Big Horn!"

"No," replied Buffalo Bill; "but I believe I am the only survivor of that massacre," and he proceeded briefly to relate what had happened.

The officer had no idea he was so close to his enemy, and he soon had the camp astir.

There were the remainder of Custer's regiment, the Seventh, and another cavalry corps, with a battery of field artillery, and these were soon on the move toward Sitting Bull's late camp.

The chief himself was very carefully guarded, but no indignity was offered to him, as Buffalo Bill represented that he had befriended the prisoners, and had himself voluntarily surrendered.

Soon after they were on the move in the morning a large party of Indians were seen to be making toward them, and the cavalry was extended so as to overlap them, while the guns trotted forward and were trained upon them. All hearts beat high with the prospect of a fight with the hated red men.

Buffalo Bill, anxious to do what he could to save Tee-cum-dah and those prisoners who still remained in the hands of the Sioux, galloped forward, when, to his surprise, he recognized Tee-cum-dah right in front of the party. He signaled to him to come on by himself, and soon learned from him that the fight of the night before had been stubbornly contested, and that the victory had been with the followers of the late Big Horse.

Tee-cum-dah managed to get away with some hundred or so of Sitting Bull's followers, and they had followed that chief.

Buffalo Bill learned this just in time to save the extermination of the party, for the guns were laid, and the cavalymen were simply waiting the word to swoop down upon their foes.

The soldiers were bitterly disappointed at not being able at once to avenge Custer's death, but they learned later that their real foes were following close on the heels of Tee-cum-dah, and soon they would be engaged.

Major Reno, the officer in command, asked Buffalo Bill if he thought the Indians could be trusted, and being assured that they could, an ambush was arranged for the redskins who were in pursuit.

A little further on was some wooded country, and in



among the trees the guns and the cavalymen were hidden, while the Indians dismounted and made believe they were camping, so that they might lure their foes on to destruction.

Some time after noon hordes of them were seen to be advancing, having possibly spent the remainder of the past night dancing around the scalps of the dead, and then started after Tee-cum-dah at daybreak.

The ambush was cleverly laid, and the redskins fell easily into it.

Seeing Tee-cum-dah's men ahead, they rushed on and attempted to surround them. They were so full of zeal to effect this that they did not notice that they were in turn surrounded, and that an ever-decreasing ring was being drawn about them.

Their first intimation was when the field guns opened fire, and the shells, plumping among the dense masses, exploded and did horrible execution.

Horribly afraid of cannon, they attempted to gallop away, but tongues of flame burst out, and they were surrounded by a ring of fire, while a hail of bullets scattered wounds and death among them.

Tee-cum-dah and his men charged through the terrified ranks of their foes, and took up a position of safety behind the guns, and then the rain of death continued.

No matter at what point the doomed savages tried to break through the cordon, they were driven back into the ring of fire, and fell until men and horses lay in heaps.

Three Indians lay dead for every trooper of the Seventh who had perished, and General Custer was avenged.

With a squadron of men under a subaltern, Buffalo Bill pushed on to the Sioux camp, which was seized, with all the squaws, children, old men, and baggage. All the other white prisoners were rescued, and the power of the great nation was broken forever.

\* \* \* \* \*

There was no other big fight after that.

The government at Washington took such steps as to render a repetition of the occurrence impossible.

True to his word, Buffalo Bill was enabled to procure Sitting Bull's pardon, for in reality the chief had not been the ringleader, after all.

He was taken on to Washington, and from there, with a party of senators, made a tour through the big towns of America.

When the rugged child of nature saw the marvelous works and resources of civilization, he was thunderstruck, and on his return to his people did more toward convincing them forever of the uselessness of struggling against the almighty white man than the fighting and conquering of the past fifty years had been able to effect.

Buffalo Bill accompanied Dare, with his wife and daughter, to Fort Abraham Lincoln, and here Willie Dare was found, well and happy, being made a great fuss of by the rough troopers.

After a brief stay of some days, the party returned together to Dare's ruined house, and although his loss in property had been very great, there was not a happier man in all America than Buffalo Bill's old comrade.

They set to work to get the big house again in order, and, with the help of a party of hired hands, the work went merrily forward.

At the expiration of a month Buffalo Bill had to return to the fort to resume his post as chief of scouts.

From the soldiers who had gone out to avenge Custer's defeat, and who were the first whites to visit the battlefield, Buffalo Bill learned that old Sergeant Ryland had been found lying dead across General Custer's body, and, strange enough, the general was the only man who had been neither scalped nor mutilated.

They were buried with military honors, as were, in fact, all the others, and to-day a handsome monument marks the spot where the wild red man of the West achieved his last great victory over the invader of his soil.

\* \* \* \* \*

In less than twelve months after the events here related Buffalo Bill was once more in the neighborhood of Richmond Ranch.

It was by that time all rebuilt and strengthened against the chance of any further attack.

Dare had a number of men working for him, and these were trained to use a rifle and wield a sword as well as any trooper.

Mrs. Dare was looking handsome as ever, and though it was not likely that the recollection of the black days she had passed through among the Sioux would ever pass away, she had to a certain extent got over the first shock.

Emily had grown into a beautiful girl, and little Willie bade fair to become as tall and handsome as his father, now once more the happy and light-hearted man he had been of yore.

After the dispersal of the Sioux Tee-cum-dah had wandered about for some months, but one night, to the surprise of all in the ranch, he arrived, with his squaw and two papposes.

Dare made him thoroughly welcome, and Saraquat was delighted with him.

The Indian stayed for some weeks, disappearing as suddenly as he had arrived, but returning again after a month or two to take up his abode in the handsome hut which Dare had given to him.

It seems now that the Indian has so far taken to his white friends and to a civilized mode of living that he intends to spend at least the greater portion of the year among them, and his delight is to teach the little Dare to shoot and ride, to track the deer and wolf, and to read the hundred and one signs of the forest that are as an open book to these wild children of nature.

Buffalo Bill spent some weeks amid the tranquil scene, and they were some of the happiest days of his life.

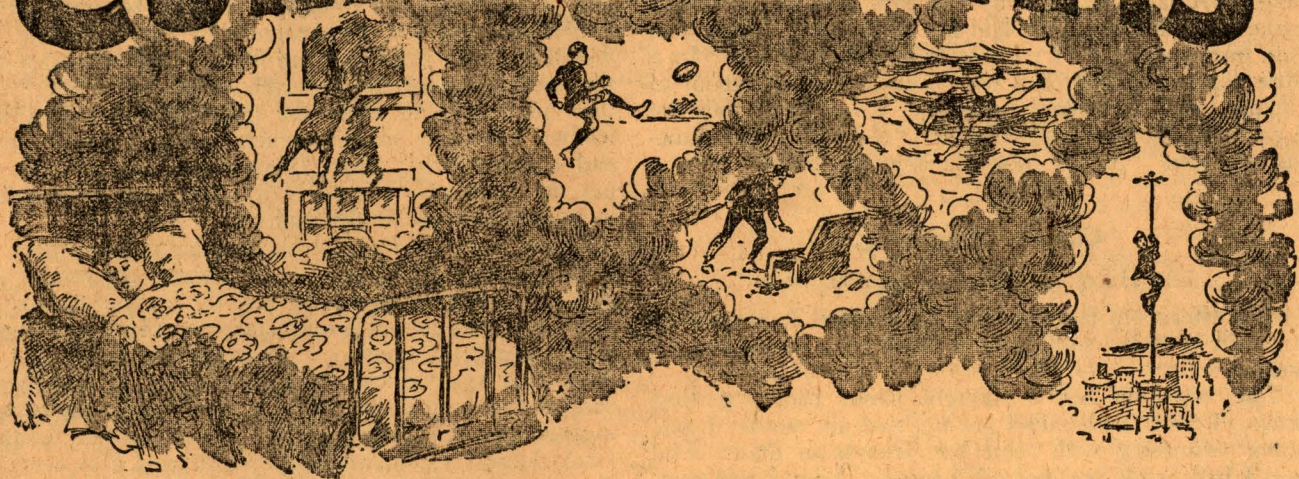
When at last he took his departure, it was only on the understanding that he should repeat his visit at least once in every twelve months, a promise that, when he is enabled to do so, he most solemnly keeps, and these visits form the most peaceful breaks in the dangerous and exciting career of The Last of the Great Scouts.

THE END.

Next week's issue, No. 96, will contain "Buffalo Bill and the Black Mustang; or, Phil Dearborn's Death Ride." A mysterious black horse running wild on the prairie, a man bound fast to his back. Buffalo Bill to the rescue. Death. Sounds like a good story. IT IS A CORKER.



# CURIOUS DREAMS



The contest is over.

The list of prize winners will be published in three weeks.

Now for a new one!

Let us all pitch in and make it a howling success.

For full particulars, see page 31.

## Killing a Man.

(By J. F. Snow, Brunswick, Me.)

This is what I dreamed after going to a theatre:

Here is a brigade of us in battle line across an old meadow; our right and left join other brigades. We have thrown down the rail fence, gathered logs and brush and sod, and erected a breastwork. It is only a slight one, but enough to shelter us while lying down. A division of the enemy breaks cover half a mile away, and comes marching down upon us.

They are going to charge us. Orders run along the line, and we are waiting until every bullet, no matter if fired by a soldier with his eyes shut, must hit a foe. I select my man while he is yet beyond range. I have eyes for no other. He is a tall, soldierly fellow, wearing the stripes of a sergeant. As he comes nearer, I imagine that he is looking as fixedly at me as I am at him. I admire his coolness. He looks neither to the right nor to the left. The man on his right is hit and goes down, but he does not falter.

I am going to kill that man. I have a rest for my gun on the breastwork, and when the order comes to fire, I cannot miss him. He is living his last minute on earth! We are calmly waiting until our volley shall prove a veritable flame of death. Now they close up the gaps and we can hear the shouts of their officers as they make ready to charge. My man is still opposite me. He still seems to be looking at me and no one else. I know the word is coming in a few seconds more, and I aim at his chest. I could almost be sure of hitting him with a stone when we get the word to fire. There is a billow of flame, a billow of smoke, a fierce crash—and four thousand bullets are fired into the compact mass of advancing men. Not one volley alone, though that worked horrible destruction, but another and another, until there was no longer a living man to fire at.

The smoke drifts slowly away; men cheer and yell; we can see the meadow beyond heaped with dead and dying men. We advance our line. As we go forward I look for my victim. He is lying on his back, eyes half shut and fingers clutching the grass. He gasps, draws up his legs and straightens them out again, and is dead as I pass on. I have killed my man! My bullet struck him, tearing that ghastly wound in his breast, and I am entitled to all the honor. Do I swing my cap and cheer? Do I point him out and expect to be congratulated? No! I have no cheers. I feel no elation. I feel that I murdered him, war or no war, and his agonized face will haunt me through all the years of my life.

## Turned Into a Rabbit.

(By Louis Kreig, Brooklyn, N. Y.)

Last election day my father and myself went out hunting on Long Island. We stayed for a week. One day we came home with some rabbits. I was tired and went to bed early. I went right to sleep and I thought a rabbit had me by the hand walking across a field to its home. When we came to its home we went in through a hole. I dreamed we kept falling and falling, until my head hit something and I went to sleep. When I awoke I found myself and some of my friends in a wood, hopping around, eating. When I looked at myself I found I was a rabbit. By and by some men came with guns. One came up to me, and said: "How do you like getting shot, like you and your father shot us when we were rabbits? So I am going to shoot you, take you home, and eat you." I tried to tell the man not to shoot me, but I could only squeak. So I made up my mind to run. I started off, but I had gone but a few steps when a loud noise rang out. I felt something sting me, and I fell over, kicking my feet. He put me in a bag and took me to a



house. A lady held me by the ears and said I would make a good stew. She laid me on a board. I tried to run, but could not. I tried to talk, but could not. In a little while she came back with a knife and was about to cut my head off when I woke up. I told my father the dream next morning and he said: "No more rabbit hunting for you." So we took the next car home.

### Cured of Swimming.

(By Harry O. Baker, Evanston, Ill.)

One afternoon, last summer, I had been in swimming for quite a while, and got very tired, so I decided to go home.

That night in bed I thought about people getting drowned, when suddenly I got up, told my mother I was going swimming with some boy friends of mine. She said I had better not, but off I went. After I had been swimming a while I started towards the pier. All at once I began slipping backwards. I was stepping into a large hole. As I could not swim well, I began to scream: "Help! Help!" I had come up the second time when somebody threw a rope to me. I grabbed at it, and finally reached it. You can imagine my surprise when I was awakened by my father shaking me violently, trying to find out what was the matter. He said I was waking everybody up in the house by my yelling. You cannot think how thankful I was when I found it to be only a dream.

### The Dream that Came True.

(By Frank R. Jackson, Belden, Ohio.)

In the year '88, I was peddling a line of notions. I carried my stock in a large pack upon my back. I usually confined my business to the rural district, stopping overnight with whatever farmer from whom I could secure hospitality, paying for the same in trade whenever possible. About dusk one evening I arrived at a small country village, situated in a valley. The village was composed of a few old-fashioned houses, a store and a dilapidated blacksmith shop. The sun was just setting behind the western hills and the windows in this old village were bathed in blood, and quiet reigned supreme.

At the first house I came to on the outskirts of the village I secured accommodations for the night. The family consisted of two old maiden sisters, both extremely ugly and with harsh, unpleasant voices. Immediately after supper, being quite tired, I requested to be shown to my room. One of the old women went into another room and returned with a small hand-lamp that was greasy and vile smelling, and burned with a sickly little yellow flame. Opening a door she disclosed a narrow stair and bade me follow her. Picking up my pack, I attempted to follow up the stairs, which was impossible with the pack, as it was square and several inches larger than the stairway. After being assured by the old woman that my goods would be perfectly safe where they were, I left the pack at the foot of the stairs, and was shown to my room. I went to bed, not without misgivings as to the safety of my goods. That night I dreamed that I saw those two old women looking through my goods

and discussing the quality of the several articles. Whenever they came to something they wanted they would lay it on a chair to one side. I distinctly saw them put stockings, towels and ribbons on the chair. They then proceeded to close the pack, which was a large leather telescope satchel which fastened with buckles and had no lock. Then I noted particularly that they put the stuff in the bottom drawer of an old-fashioned bureau that stood in the room.

In the morning a glance showed me that my pack had been tampered with, and as I was alone in the room I went over to the bureau and pulled out the bottom drawer, and there, right on top of a miscellaneous lot of wearing apparel, were my goods. I gathered them up and put them back in my pack where they belonged, and had the pack buckled up before one of the old women came in to announce that breakfast was ready. After breakfast I asked for my bill, which they said was fifty cents and dirt cheap at that. As they absolutely refused to take it in trade or look at my goods, I paid them in cash and went my way.

### Fighting Ghosts With Buffalo Bill.

(By Eric H. Bremer, Brooklyn, N. Y.)

My strangest dream took place less than a year ago, and was of such an odd character that I take pleasure in describing it. In my fancy I was on a low prairie, with a cluster of trees in the distance. The time was midnight, and the moon was shining brightly. Suddenly I was startled by the touch of a hand upon my shoulder. Turning quickly, I saw behind me a handsome man, clad in buckskin. At once I recognized Buffalo Bill, the great scout. Of course I was pleased to meet so brave and gallant a man, and I said so. Soon Buffalo Bill and I became very friendly and we rode across the prairie together. We approached the cluster of trees, and were suddenly startled by the appearance of several ghastly apparitions, who sprang from the trees. Ghosts! My teeth chattered, my limbs shook. Buffalo Bill was calmer. He drew his revolver and fired six shots, which made no impression upon our new and unwelcome acquaintances. They rushed at us and pulled us from our horses. Oh, how frightened I was! Other ghosts ran out from the trees and one of them muttered something. A minute later the ghost who held me lifted a knife in the air and down it came toward my heart! I shrieked, struggled, and—awoke. The sweat poured off me in streams. No more such dreams for me; this one was quite sufficient.

### A Dream of Fire.

(By Harrison Drew, Philadelphia, Pa.)

I had just come in from playing firemen with the boys of the neighborhood. I ate my supper, including three large pieces of pie, and retired, thinking how much I would like to be a fireman. I usually slept on my right side, but last night I happened to turn over on my left. As soon as I was asleep, according to my estimation, I dreamed that our house was on fire and that I was tied down in my bed with strong cords which I could not break. As I was about to suffocate, I awoke to find



that my head was buried beneath the pillow. I quickly pulled the pillow off my head, and was all right afterward. I have not wanted to be a fireman since, and always make it a rule not to eat over two pieces of pie, because I believed it was the pie that made me dream.

### A Queer Dream.

(By Lawrence Polster, St. Louis, Mo.)

One Tuesday evening I sat by the fire watching the flames, when my mother came in and told me to go to bed, as it was nine o'clock. Soon I was in dreamland. I thought it was Christmas, and I had got a rifle, and, accompanied by five or six other boys of the neighborhood, I went on a bear hunt. On our way we met President Roosevelt coming home from a bear hunt, and he told us where the most bears were to be found. At night we camped on the bank of a little stream, and I was to keep watch for the forepart of the night. As I was not used to the work, I soon fell asleep, and when I awoke in front of me was a huge bear, standing upright, surveying our camp. I was so scared that I didn't know what to do, but in a minute I gathered enough nerve to draw an old revolver I had with me. But it seemed as though there were no bullets in it, for it would not shoot. Then I dropped the gun and started to run, but I could not. Then I started to cry out, and, to my amazement, I could not do that, either. Then, crack! crack! two rifle shots rang out, and the bear fell over, apparently dead. Out from the bushes an Indian walked, clothed in buckskin. Then to my surprise the Indian and bear both vanished. The first thing I did was to wake up my comrades. When of a sudden I woke up, to find my mother over me saying, "Get up; it is time to get up." My! I was glad my experience was only a dream.

### A Murder Dream.

(By James Y. Stephenson, Toronto, Canada.)

I had just finished reading the dreams in the latest Buffalo Bill when I suddenly went on a journey to dreamland. I dreamed that I was with my brother going along the street when he said, "Come on in here." So I did not think any more about the house, but I went in and there was an old woman sitting by the table on a chair, sewing, and there was a wild, inhuman light in her eyes. I heard my brother give a kind of chuckle, and I turned around to look at him and there was the same inhuman light in his eyes as was in the woman's eyes. Then I turned around to look at the old woman, and she had got up and was going toward a kind of coop, and then she fetched out a boy about my size and gave him to my brother, who pulled out a long knife with a fiendish grin on his face, and started to run it into the boy's legs and arms and body. I started toward him to stop him, but when he saw me coming he drove the knife into the boy's side, and the boy fell to the ground with the knife in his side. My brother then pulled it out and drove it into his neck, and the boy started to screech for all he was worth. Then I looked at the old woman and she was on the chair with a fiendish grin on her face, and was chattering away to herself. I then knew I was between two maniacs. I

started toward my brother, who was wiping the long, black-handled knife on the old woman's sewing, but when he saw me he uttered a yell and started toward me with the knife in his hand and upraised. I felt for my revolver, but it was gone. I grappled with him, but he was too strong for me. He threw me on the table near the window, and started to run the knife in my legs. I kicked out the window and tried to get out, but he grabbed me and pulled me back. I then saw my chance. I gave him a hard rap on the wrist, and, whizz! the knife skimmed my head and went through the window. He then laid me with my head on the sill, and started to pick up a hunk of glass and run it across my throat. I reached down for the knife, but could not get it. Then I raised myself up and the knife was in my hand, but how it got there I do not know. Anyway, I saw my chance and I put all my force in that arm and drove the knife into his side, and he fell to the ground, shrieking and screaming. Then the old woman yelled, "You have killed your brother," and she grabbed my throat. Then I drove the knife into her neck and she fell down on the floor. I stood like one dumb, but it was all over. I felt a heavy hand laid on my shoulder and a gun thrust in my face, and there was a big bluecoat there, and he said: "Come along, now; you murdered those two people." When all of a sudden rip, bang; my father was shaking me and was saying: "It is half-past eight; get up," and my sister's baby was bawling for all it was worth.

### The Panther.

(By C. M. Beggerly, Meridian, Miss.)

It was a cold December day when one of our neighbors had killed a beef, of which we were to get one-fourth.

My aunt started me off early in the morning so that I could get back before dinner.

When I reached my neighbor's house I found the Englene boys fixing the camping outfit to go fishing. I stayed around and talked until a little before sundown, then I threw my piece of beef across my back and started off.

When I got about three-quarters of a mile I heard a curious noise. The farther I got the plainer the noise became.

When at last I reached a small road that branched into the main road, I saw a big thing standing in the road. At first I didn't know what to do, but I knew the thing would catch me if I started home, because it was ten miles. So I cut out to the branch road as fast as my legs would carry me.

At last I reached Uncle Jim Dawson's house. Over the rail fence I went and on to the gallery, striking the door and knocking it wide open, but still had my beef with me.

Before I could get upon my feet Uncle Jim said:

"Hey there, boy, what's the matter with you?"

I could hardly answer, but I managed to say:

"Some kind of a thing got after me. He was as big as a young yearling."

"I don't believe you," he said.

"Well, let's see," spoke up Aunt Sallie.

So Uncle Jim got his old rifle, and Aunt Sallie fixed a torch.



Just as they left the door I heard Uncle Jim say:

"A panther, upon my word."

As he said that I heard his rifle crack.

And then a painful howl.

Uncle Jim and Aunt Sallie came into the house. Uncle Jim said:

"My boy, it was a panther, and you had better stay here."

I stayed there that night, and the next morning he carried me and my beef home in his wagon.

There was nothing heard of the panther until about a week after my scare. When he was heard of next he had killed two sheep and a calf.

By twelve o'clock that day there was a big crowd of men there with their dogs, determined to kill or run him away. So I thought I would go with them. I borrowed an old muzzle-loader. I loaded it pretty heavy with nails.

We stuck to the trail until about four when we found him lying out on a big tree that had fallen on another.

One of the men raised and fired, but the panther leaped to the ground.

That evening, about five-thirty o'clock, we ran him into a big hole in the ground.

We punched and shot down in the hole, but all in vain. At last we decided to smoke him out. We had the smoke going all night, but nothing happened until the sun was about three hours high. Then something burst through the fire sending it everywhere. I was the first to raise my gun and fire, but my game got away.

So this ends my story, as I awoke.

### A Bad Fall.

(By Roland Boening, Chicago, Ill.)

I was driving a wagon when I had my dream. I fell asleep, and dreamed that I was walking across a high bridge. The wind blew my hat off. I tried to catch it, but could not, as it had fallen over the edge of the bridge. Looking over, I could see my hat hanging on a large log which projected out from under the bridge. I looked around for a means to get down to the log. Seeing a rope lying nearby, I picked it up and fastened it to the bridge. I started to lower myself, and had gotten about halfway, when the rope broke. I came down with a crash. And when I awoke, I found myself lying in a ditch at the side of the road. The horses had shied at something in the road, and, going too far to one side, had caused the wagon to fall over.

### A Greedy Boy.

(By Leon M. Hecht, Nashville, Tenn.)

The day was a very wet one and the rain was pouring down in torrents. I went to bed and could not go to sleep at first, but after a while I fell off to sleep. I used to work at my grandma's store every Saturday, and I always wore an apron, and that night I dreamed that I was down one Saturday, the rain was pouring in torrents, but after a while it changed into gold coins, and people were running out into the streets to pick up the money, and, of course, I ran out, too, and was soon filling my apron full, and I had gathered so much that I could not

stir but I kept on till the gold coins were up to my shoulders and I tried to rise, but could not. As I made one more effort, my apron burst and fell over on my head. And I awoke to find my mother and aunt running toward me. My head was bleeding from a bruise.

### A Burglar.

(By Oscar Werner, San Antonio, Texas.)

Sunday it was cloudy and warm, and toward night it got a little cooler. At night I went to the opera, and when I got out a nice, cool norther had blown up. When I got home I went to bed. It was about eleven o'clock, and I fell asleep in a little while; and, all at once, felt that I was getting chloroformed. The man was just getting me to sleep, but I could scream a little yet, and I started to do so. "Get out of here," I cried, and then felt him squirting more chloroform on me. I felt the cold stream on my hands, and then I yelled as loud as I could, and woke up. I told my people the next night and they had a good laugh on me.

### SPECIAL.

We have so many letters of applause and approval, that, as a rule, it is impossible to print them. But we have decided to make an exception in the case of the following from England, which seems to us will be of peculiar interest to our readers:

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January 14, 1903.

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You wouldn't believe what a rush there is for your book in England. My news agent tells me that lots of times he can't get them fast enough, and I can't get them in their proper numbers. I only wish your offices were much nearer than they are. If you had them in England, for instance, it would be nice. I should come to see you then.

We are having very cold weather now and snow with it. I haven't any more news to tell you now, but I hope your books will have a wider circulation than ever, and believe me to be your constant reader,

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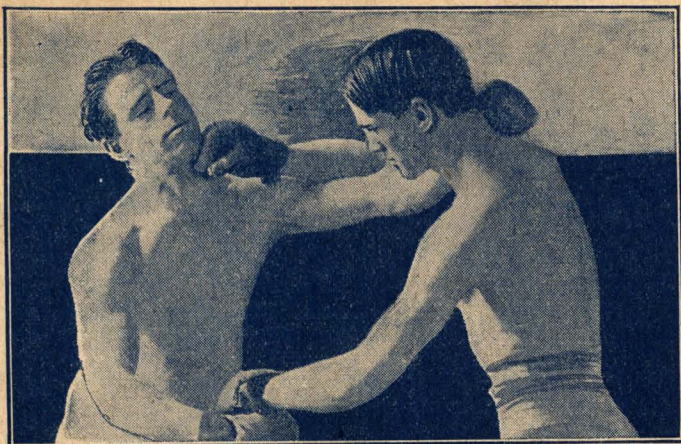
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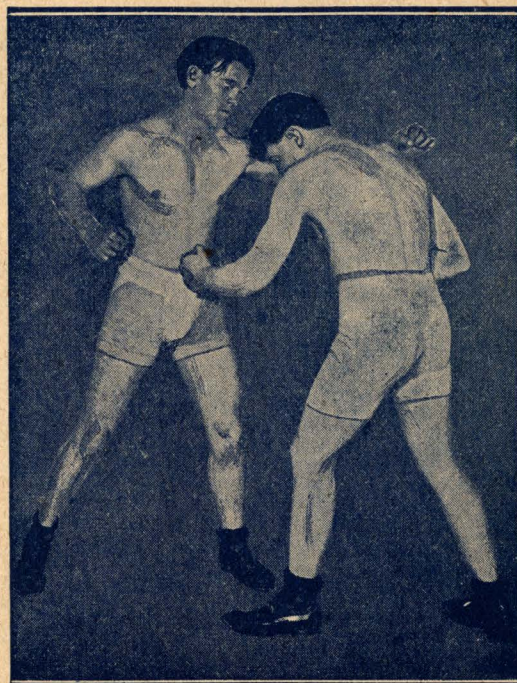
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